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NEW STATESMAN

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We regret there was no room for either the letters page or the chess column this week. Both will be back in the next issue.

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Upstream v... Salmon

SOMETHING can be said for raising a judge a little above the corruptions of everyday life. But nothing can be said for judges living in a dream-world of the sort which Lord Wilberforce seems to inhabit. In deciding against Granada Television in the case of the British Steel 'mole', his Lordship announced he

> would be glad to be counted among those whose voice had been raised in favour of this great national possession — a free press: who indeed would not?

If Lord Wilberforce likes to call at our office, he can have a list as long as his arm of people and organisations in this society who are actively in league against the 'great national possession', such as it is: in each case he will be furnished with a name, an address and a clear picture showing both ears.

Pride of place, just now, would go to those Home Office bureaucrats who are taking the National Council for Civil Liberties to court in an effort to extend — yes, extend — the scope of Britain's tyrannical contempt-of-court law, in spite of the fact that it has been discredited by conflict with the European Convention on Human Rights.

The facts illuminate British official attitudes to freedom of the press. Harriet Harman of the NCCL, while preparing a case for an ex-prisoner, extracted from the Home Office a vast amount of documentation on the setting up of 'control units' in British prisons. Some of these documents were read out during the hearing (which ultimately failed), and a battery of shorthand-writers could easily have taken down all the information. This costly facility was missing: Harriet Harman showed these exhibited documents to David Leigh of the *Guardian* in order to help him write an article on the case — and the Home Office's aim is to try to have this declared contempt of court. Although there is a reasonable doctrine which says that exhibited documents are secret until they are read out in court, it has not been argued before now that they remain secret afterwards. Leaving the merits of the case, such as they are, aside, this is nothing more than a Whitehall department using its superior muscle to expose to exhausting litigation an organisation which has dared to criticise its behaviour, and which it knows to be without substantial funds. On the evidence of *Granada,* the courts can probably be relied upon to exclude this obvious truth from their consideration. What is most striking about Lord Wilberforce's speech — apart from some outrageous flim-flam about national-security cases of no possible relevance to the issue — is the impression it disseminates of British Steel as something akin to a family umbrella-stand business undergoing assault from Fleet Street gossip columnists deployed in battalion strength. What a great gulf there was, he thought, 'between what was interesting to the public and what it was in the public interest to make known'.

BELIEVING AS we do that our liberties would not long survive the collapse of our law into maundering irrelevance, we are glad to turn to another judge for a demolition of this nonsense. This comes from the under-reported speech of Lord Salmon — a judge who has indeed raised his voice more than once for freedom of expression — and it only remains to note that Salmon's cogency did not prevent him being outvoted. Courtroom fictions aside

> BSC was in a parlous condition. It was not surprising that the public should wish, and indeed were morally entitled, to know how it was that it was in such a condition. Was it due to bad management, or to Government interference, or to trade union action . . .?
>
> 'The unnamed source of information' . . . apparently had copies of many confidential documents . . . It seemed to his Lordship obvious that (the informant) was convinced that the contents of those papers would (a) reveal the faults of management . . . and (b) help to stop the rot. The man considered it was his public duty to make the contents of the documents available to the public because the immense sums of money being lost were being lost by the public . . . In a nationalised industry (the public) did not have anything like the same safeguards as shareholders.
>
> When Granada were brought the papers they considered, rightly, that if any of them exposed the faults and mistakes causing BSC's immense losses, *it would be Granada's duty to disclose the contents* to the public.

Salmon then made short work of the precedents cited by the other side. Cases involving national security were clearly irrelevant, and the argument suggesting that the press could only protect its sources in cases involving 'crime, fraud or misconduct' was based on a fallacy. To show that BSC was not criminal was not to show that all its actions should be cloaked in confidentiality — there might still be much which 'called aloud to be revealed'. Indeed, the immunity of the press from revelation of its sources had nothing to do with confidentiality:

> It rested . . . on the principle of justice that the public should not be unreasonably deprived by a free press of information of great public importance.

Journalists and dissident individuals must not expect an easy path, and must expect the great bureaucracies of modern Britain — public and private — to fight jealously for their privileges. But a new element of danger is added when judges uphold the pretence that the great corporate powers of society are somehow no more than individuals before the law.

Rather obviously, the fact that the 'mole' has surfaced of his own accord robs their Lordships' decision of some of its awful majesty — which means, no doubt, that the issue will have to be tested again. When that occurs, the journalists involved will do best to stick to a plain and straightforward version of the argument laid down by Lord Salmon: if Granada were in error, it was because they became involved in elaborate and essentially unconvincing technical arguments about 'self-incrimination'.

It may be worth saying in conclusion that the *New Statesman* will never betray a source. The majority of the House may do and say as it will: we shall adhere to the principles of the dissenting judge.

NEXT WEEK

We continue from Peter Kellner's opening analysis of the Whitehall machinery with an account — in lavish, serio-comic detail — of the stumbling progress of an actual Bill through the elaborate rituals of Parliament.

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THERE GOES MICHAEL ON HIS DAILY WALK AGAIN, NORMAN!
NOT SO MUCH A DAILY WALK, NORA— MORE A SORT OF VIGOROUS LABOUR MOVEMENT - HO! HO!
VALE OF HEALTH

Rob Rohrer finds that local authorities want to pay firemen 18 per cent

Green Goddesses patrol pay battleground

THE WILLINGNESS of local authorities to honour their index-linked pay agreement with the firemen, which was apparent until cabinet ministers intervened last week, is underlined in employers' documents obtained by the Fire Brigades Union on Merseyside. More than a third of the fire authorities, these reveal, had already budgeted to pay the firemen increases of between 13 and 20 per cent — rather than the six per cent public sector pay limit imposed last week by the government. In addition, notes one document, 'final fire service budgets for 1980-81 in England and Wales show a possible underspending of £14 million (3.5 per cent).'

Minutes and background papers prepared by the employers show that a clear majority were 'resigned' to observing the pay formula, which ensures firemen's pay is linked to the upper 25 per cent of manual workers' earnings. Last Friday, however, following intense government pressure, the local authorities abandoned this pay formula, originally agreed to settle the 1978 firemen's strike. This would have guaranteed an 18.8 per cent settlement this year, giving a qualified fireman an extra £20 a week on the present £106. Under a similar index-linked deal which the government did not interfere with, police pay went up 21.3 per cent in September.

The same papers disclose how the Tory-dominated National Joint Council for Fire Brigades — the employers' body — resisted hawkish attempts to breach the indexing formula several months ago and voted its then-chairman out of office. In a motion he was forced to withdraw, Ronald Wootton, a Tory hardliner from the West Midlands County Council, had asked that 'automatic indexing . . . be withdrawn as being against the public interest'.

The NJC minutes also hint at how the firemen might figure in the government's pay tactics: 'A successful disengagement from the pay formula would provide a very strong warning to other groups in local government,' suggests Brian Rusbridge, the NJC's secretary. 'In the last pay round the battleground was steel. The line will be drawn in the new pay round, but where?'

A fair indication of the answer came some time ago when the Home Office ordered the overhaul of 1,000 'Green Goddess' fire fighting vehicles, last used by the army in the 1978 strike. Last Monday — the night before FBU negotiations with the employers began at the NJC's Belgrave Square headquarters — William Whitelaw summoned local government representatives to the Home Office. The announcement of a single figure public sector pay limit, they were told, was imminent.

On the Tuesday the employers told the FBU that, while they did not want to abrogate the pay formula, a figure lower than 18 per cent would need to be negotiated to avoid redundancies. The talks were adjourned in deadlock. But on Thursday night Michael Heseltine called in more council representatives to present them with the 6 per cent pay curb. Friday's resumed negotiations went swiftly to the point: the employers, sweeping aside the 1978 formula, were offering no more than 6 per cent.

'All of a sudden central government had damn well realised the local authorities were not going to produce what needed producing,' says Wootton, the NJC's deposed Tory chairman, 'so the government issued its edict, spelt it out for them, and there they all were flooding in to support the six per cent.'

By 18 votes to 12 the local authorities agreed to jettison the index-linked wages formula so many of them had considered 'morally binding' only a few weeks earlier. Among the 12 were two Conservatives, joining forces with the convention of Scottish local authorities which is still campaigning vigorously to implement the agreed 18.8 per cent deal. The local authorities' capitulation to government pressure infuriated the FBU executive, who had been led to believe for weeks that the basic formula would be honoured.

Although next Friday's FBU delegate conference at Blackpool will support sporadic one-day strikes along with the present emergencies-only work-to-rule, a national strike, predict executive members, is not far away. FBU anger has already been aroused by the government's Green Paper on the fire service which envisages 4,000 redundancies and substantial vehicle reductions. During the eight-week strike that finished in January 1978, property damage rose by £50 million. Cuts made in the last twelve months — including the withdrawal of around 50 vehicles — are blamed by the FBU for fire damage rising from £331 million in July 1979 to £497 million by July this year.

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Who should choose the leader?

Next Spring Michael Foot is likely to have to defend his position as the Labour Party's new leader before an electoral college. How wide should the college's franchise be? ALEX GERLIS reports on how Grimsby's MP, Austin Mitchell, conducted his own postal ballot of individual party members last month; while MICHAEL MEACHER puts the case against one-member-one-vote.

'WE ARE ALL DEMOCRATS NOW, the only question is how much democracy we want'. Grimsby's Labour MP, Austin Mitchell, was speaking after the first ballot in the election for the Labour leadership and in the light of his own unique experiment in Party democracy. A secret postal ballot he had organised of all individual members of the Labour Party in Grimsby had resulted in a clear-cut victory for Denis Healey. Indeed, as the results of the first ballot in the Party leadership were being announced Healey must have been secretly wishing that the electorate had been confined to members of the Grimsby Labour Party.

Mitchell, an Oxford academic turned television journalist, turned by-election victor, prepared the ballot paper carefully. A ballot paper was sent to each of the 400 members of the Grimsby Labour Party together with four pages of notes setting out what he saw as the necessary criteria for the leadership, together with the pros and cons of each candidate and their biographical details. In his notes Mitchell made clear what he saw as the purpose of the ballot:

> I will be making my own mind up and will not regard the result of this ballot as mandating me. I think you elected me to use my judgement, not just take instructions. Yet the choice between the contenders is a difficult one and the opinions of the Grimsby Party members, knowing as they do the mood of the Party members, knowing as they do the mood of the Party and the people, will be an invaluable guide to me as I decide.

77.5 per cent (310) of Party members replied to the ballot, a response which Mitchell interprets as showing 'that Party members do want to be consulted and are interested in what is going on'. Two of the four questions on the ballot paper were regarding the principle of election. *Question One* asked, "should the Parliamentary Party elect a leader now?" Of the 299 who answered this question 88% said "yes" and 12% "no".

Question Two was the crucial one. It asked the members to list their preferences in numerical order against the names of the candidates, who were listed alphabetically. The result was as follows:

1

	No. of Placings			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Healey	182 (59%)	33	38	57
Foot	65 (21%)	79	66	100
Shore	40 (13%)	132	96	42
Silkin	23 (7%)	66	110	111

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES CAST – 310

On this basis Healey would have won on the first ballot as he fulfilled the over 50% requirement.

This clear-cut preference for Healey surprised Mitchell as his General Management Committee had been fairly evenly divided between Healey, Foot and Silkin.

By translating the results in Table 1 into a points basis (4 points for each 1st placing, 3 for each 2nd, 2 for each 3rd and 1 for each 4th placing) the following result emerges: Healey 960, Shore 790, Foot 729, Silkin 621. Healey is still the winner, but Peter Shore's promotion to second place indicates how much centre ground he had occupied in the preferential ballot where he gained more second placings (132) and fewer fourth placings (42) than any other candidate.

In the event Austin Mitchell voted for Peter Shore on the first ballot and Denis Healey on the second. He felt his personal views were backed up by the results of the ballot.

Question Three asked, "should whoever emerges as the leader resubmit himself to an electoral college, however composed, if one is agreed by the Party Conference next year?" The result of this question was closer. 306 answered the question, 56% saying "yes" and 44% saying "no".

The final question provides an interesting pointer as to the voting intentions of the Party members in the future election. *Question Four* said; 'Tony Benn has said that he will submit himself to the new election procedure but not to the PLP election. Would you prefer as Leader:' (They were then asked to choose one of the following three options):

Tony Benn's figure is surprisingly low and more than half of his votes were originally Michael Foot first preferences.

A good deal of credibility must be attributed to this ballot. It was not a straw opinion poll of some Labour voters but a secret ballot of *all* the Labour Party members in one constituency. It would be hard to describe any one constituency Labour Party as being typical, but the range of views among Grimsby Party members, who enjoy a Labour MP and control of the local council, is unlikely to be atypical. Austin Mitchell is probably a fair reflection of a constituency Party that is neither noticeably left or right wing. Tony Crosland, Grimsby's MP for 18 years, obviously had a strong influence on the Party but the effect of the Common Market on the fishing industry has instilled feelings on the EEC that are probably reflected in Peter Shore's result.

The calls for the widened franchise to be expressed by means of a secret ballot are likely to grow. Austin Mitchell says 'we have shown that it is perfectly practicable to widen the franchise over the leadership issue, which I personnaly favour, with all Party members having a vote'. Mitchell's experience with the Grimsby Party has convinced him of the merits of a ballot for all Party members. 'Allowing individual Party members a vote in the leadership is a fair and realistic way of involving people who work hard for the Party all year round and who will soon be paying £5 a year in subscriptions'.

2

		Their First Preference on Q2			
		Healey	Foot	Shore	Silkin
Whoever is elected by the PLP	71 (24%)	53	7	5	6
Tony Benn	47 (16%)	2	28	7	10
Your first choice on Q2	178 (60%)	115	29	27	7

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES CAST – 296

The case for a college

IT IS BECOMING FASHIONABLE among those now advocating a 1-member, 1-vote system to denigrate the proposed leadership electoral college as being insufficiently democratic. Indeed some have even claimed to be suspicious of those who wanted democracy, but not too much.

Certainly it's right that the electoral college should be a means, consistently with well-tried and already successfully operating democratic frameworks, of *opening up* the franchise, not of restricting it to party caucuses. That's why it's important that consultation procedures should be agreed whereby both trade union branches and the wider CLP memberships are genuinely involved to ensure maximum attendance at mandating meetings.

Even so the objections to the proposed college turn out to be more expedient than principled. For previously the critics had insisted that the right to elect should be confined to those personally familiar with the candidates, namely MPs. How come then that they now want the franchise opened up to those who have had no personal experience of the candidates whatsoever? Especially when members of the proposed electoral college *are* likely to fulfil their condition of knowing the candidates well.

But is it right, they say, that constituency activists on GMCs should take their decision under an electoral college system without being mandated by a ballot of individual party members? In that case one can only wonder why these same persons have never objected that the GMCs which selected every present Labour MP in the first place without any ballot of individual party members were not properly democratic. Who among these critics ever demanded such a universal members' ballot to validate their GMC's choice of them as Parliamentary candidate for their party?

Is it seriously being proposed that for a wider leadership election the trade unions should be disenfranchised completely from any direct participation, and that trade union members should only have a vote if they join a local Labour Party on an individual basis? If so, why has this never been suggested before for Conference decisions? The simple fact is that direct trade union participation, specifically as trade unionists, has always, and rightly, played an absolutely essential role in decision-making within the Labour Party.

But anyway those who fear trade union domination need to be reminded that an electoral college of, say, ⅓ plus ⅓ plus ⅓ is heavily biassed *against* the trade unions in terms of individual voting weights. For the trade unions with 12,000,000 members will have no more votes than the constituency parties with only some 250,000 members nationally or even tham MPs who number at present only 269.

Alex Gerlis was a member of Grimsby CLP until 1977, and is now press officer for APEX.
Michael Meacher is MP for Oldham West; this is an extract from a speech he made at Northampton last Friday.

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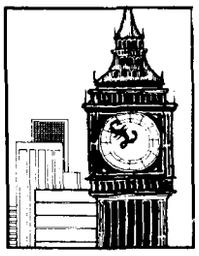


Peter Kellner, Political Editor

Michael Foot and the porcupine

WHEN FLEET STREET is unanimous it is generally wrong. It was wrong about Chamberlain and Munich in 1938, wrong about America's involvement in Vietnam in the 1960s, and wrong about the economic impact on Britain of Common Market membership in the early 1970s. This week it is unanimous that Labour MPs have made a bad mistake in choosing Michael Foot as their new leader. It is therefore tempting to conclude that Foot will in fact be an excellent leader.

The most likely outcome of Foot's leadership, however, is that he will neither appal his right-wing critics nor satisfy his left-wing supporters. His two main chances of leading Labour to more progressive policies lie in economics and defence. If he makes Peter Shore shadow chancellor in place of Denis Healey, then Labour will be able to mount a more radical assault on the Government's economic policies. And if he can construct a defence policy around unambiguous opposition to America's Cruise missiles, then Labour can start to pay off some of the moral overdraft it so recklessly piled up in the Wilson/Callaghan years. (Note of textual detail: despite some press reports to the contrary, Foot has already retreated from the unilateralist position on nuclear weapons; that is why the interesting thing to watch now will be whether he holds fast to his opposition to Cruise.)

Substantial progress on both fronts by a Foot-led Labour government would be good news indeed, reducing *The Times* (if it survives) and the *Daily Telegraph* to a quite delicious state of apoplexy. But how likely is it to happen? On his record, the danger must be that Foot will make a weak Prime Minister, with neither the command of detail nor a sufficient scepticism of the bureaucracy to make radical policies work.

The problem of bringing Whitehall to heel bears a marked resemblance to the problem that Wilson Mizner, a film scriptwriter, had in getting his way in Hollywood in the 1930s. It was, he used to say, like having sex with a porcupine: 'one prick against thousands'. To implement the policies that many of Foot's supporters want will require many such uncomfortable encounters. Yet Foot himself does not appear to have seen the need to defeat the conservatism of Whitehall, let alone developed a strategy for doing so.

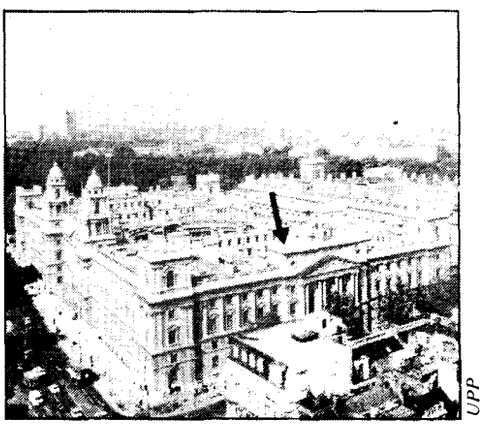
JOHN MACKINTOSH, the Labour MP for Berwick until his death two years ago, told the following story about Foot in a Granada TV *State of the Nation* debate on select committees seven years ago:

> I remember once listening to Michael Foot making an attack on the [1964] Labour Government's policy of keeping troops East of Suez, a brilliant attack I thought, [if] a little insubstantial in places. And I remember saying to him, wouldn't it have been a good idea if we'd had a Defence Committee which could have discovered the cost of the bases East of Suez. We could have heard the generals and the admirals on how effective they thought our forces were there, and heard about our treaty commitments, and discovered a little of the thinking behind it. And Michael said to me, 'No, it wouldn't have helped me at all. I only find facts confuse my arguments.'

Foot, replying to Mackintosh, did not deny he had used those words. He said:

> I'm sorry that this instructive hyperbole fell on such stony ground. But it happens to have a great deal of virtue in it because if you have too many facts, it destroys the argument, and it is the argument which people want to hear.

It may be said that to quote a seven-year-old exchange is unfair. But Foot has shown great consistency on what he regards as the sanctity of the chamber of the House of Commons.



UPP

Whitehall: arrow points to defective mandarins

There is, of course, much more to running a radical government and allowing MPs to keep a check on Whitehall than setting up select committees to monitor individual departments. Yet the debates over the role of the Commons have performed an important function. They have illuminated some of the issues involved in securing political control over a complex system of government; and they have identified where some of the principal actors stand. It is too much to hope that Foot will change his own views; a more modest hope is that some of the people he will now gather round him will start grappling with the problems — not just what policies Labour should have, but how to implement them.

FORTUNATELY FOR LABOUR, more thought than usual is being given to this very question, even if by people not too close to Foot himself. The Fabian Society is conducting an enterprising inquiry into the machinery of government, bringing together former Labour ministers and special advisers with backbenchers, academics and serving civil servants. The Royal Institute of Public Administration has recently published a collection of speeches by five former cabinet ministers, ranging from Tony Benn to Shirley Williams, on the relationship between ministers and civil servants.[1] And John Garrett, management consultant turned Labour MP, has written a highly pertinent new book, *Managing the Civil Service*.[2] (In the 1960s Garrett was a consultant to the Fulton Committee on the reform of the Civil Service.)

A surprising degree of consensus exists for the view that much is wrong in the relations between ministers and mandarins: dissatisfaction is no longer confined to lefties, academics, and management nuts. In the RIPA lectures, for example, there was considerable common ground between Benn and Williams — on the way civil servants sometimes tried to restrict information reaching ministers, or simply failed to carry out ministerial instructions they did not like:

> Ministers rarely have time to progress-chase their smaller decisions. Unless the matter is bound to come up again, a Minister's decision may just get itself lost. If the Minister does recall his decision, administrative error or clerical misfiling provide handy excuses.

That was in fact Williams, but it could have been Benn — or, for that matter, Margaret Thatcher.

Just as the analysis finds common ground, so do some of the solutions. Benn, Williams, John Garrett and the Fabians could all unite round a package of reforms that included a Freedom of Information Act, ministerial *cabinets* of special advisers within departments, and the strengthening of select committees to provide them with bigger and better qualified staffs to monitor the executive.

Broadly the argument for these measures is that ministers would have a better idea of what civil servants were getting up to, Parliament would have a better idea of what ministers were getting up to, and the public would have a better idea of what everybody was getting up to. This argument for reform rests on the experience that closed government tends to be biased towards the most conservative instincts of senior civil servants — and the calculation that more open government would expose, and thus prevent, attempts to dilute Labour's radical purpose when in office.

But that assumes that Labour has a radical purpose in office. As one retired permanent secretary told a private seminar organised by the Fabians earlier this month, 'if you think it was the Civil Service that forced the last Labour Government to accept the IMF terms, you are out of your mind.' Quite so: although it must be said that the Treasury did not exactly mount any strong arguments for an alternative economic strategy at the time. On that occasion, the political feebleness of the Cabinet found itself in perfect harmony with the instincts of the mandarins.

The corollary is that the next Labour Government will need both radical policies and detailed ideas for ensuring that they are implemented. The last two Labour Governments possessed too few of either, and very seldom both in the same place at the same time. The fusing of objective with method, and of analysis with ideology, is not likely to be actively encouraged by Michael Foot; but there is a chance — just a chance — that some of the people round him will have a try.

1. *Policy and Practice: The experience of Government*, published by RIPA, 3 Birdcage Walk, London SW1; £5.50
2. *Managing the Civil Service*, by John Garrett; published by Heinemann; £7.50.

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Deadly freight from Sizewell

The people of Suffolk are increasingly alarmed at the dangers posed by Sizewell's 'nuclear park', where there are plans to add two PWRs to the magnox station already on stream. JUDITH COOK reports that flasks of spent uranium rods are being left unattended in railway sidings for days on end.

A STRETCH OF WASTE GROUND, a deserted railway line. Anyone can climb the gate, as I did, and stroll unobserved six or seven yards. There, at the end of the railway line, beneath a crane, is a flask of nuclear waste from the magnox power station at Sizewell on the Suffolk coast. It is awaiting transport to Windscale, via Ipswich, for reprocessing. It has not moved for several days. Nobody is guarding it. The amount of supervision it gets seems to depend on how often the man in the nearby crossing keeper's house happens to look out of his window.

Consignments of nuclear waste travel two miles by road to this small railhead at Leiston. And then, often, they wait: a flask sits unattended over almost every weekend. According to the Atomic Energy Authority, if all the waste in one of them were released, the area 12 miles around would have to be evacuated for 200 years.

Of course, the flasks are constructed to avoid that. Eight-foot cubes, they have an outer skin of 14-inch steel. Inside, there are 200 spent uranium rods, protected by magnox cladding. These are composed of 99 per cent uranium and one per cent of caesium 137, strontium 90, ruthenium 106 and plutonium 239. The flasks are designed to resist engulfment by fire for half an hour at a temperature of 800° centigrade, and impact at 30 miles per hour. The trains which take them to Windscale can travel at more than 70 miles per hour. If damage were done to any of the flasks, the radioactive cooling water would leak out and heat radiated by the waste would melt its magnox cladding and eventually set it on fire. The Central Electricity Generating Board admits that six hours after such an accident, the caesium, strontium, ruthenium and plutonium would be released. There are six grammes of ruthenium in a typical consignment: 1/30 millionth part of a gramme in the lung can kill. It is too expensive, says the CEGB, to test each flask individually for faults.

If the flasks were more than cracked — by detonation, say — the results would be far worse. Even if only 10 per cent of the waste were released, says the AEA, three square miles around the accident would have to be evacuated for five years and the area 500 yards around would remain uninhabitable for 500 years.

At Leiston, special lifting gear transfers the flasks on to rolling stock. About three times a fortnight they travel to Ipswich to be collected by the main line train. At any time there, up to four full flasks can be waiting in the railway sidings for between two and eight days. They are not guarded. A British Rail spokesman told me:

> It is not a matter of guarding but of supervising. To this end the flasks are always under supervision when stationary. They are in a busy area and it would be difficult for anyone to come along and tamper with them without being seen.

But there seemed to be no-one around in the early hours of one Sunday morning when I went to have a close look at the stationary flasks. (A terrorist would hardly choose noon on a busy working day.) They are slightly more difficult to approach than at Leiston: you have to cross a railway line and walk about 50 yards. A group of protesters recently proved it was possible to get into the station by buying platform tickets, point imitation bazookas at the flasks and walk away without anybody showing any interest. Jamie Cann, Labour leader of Ipswich Town Council, who has been running a campaign to ban the transport of waste through Ipswich, quotes the Royal Commission on Nuclear Energy:

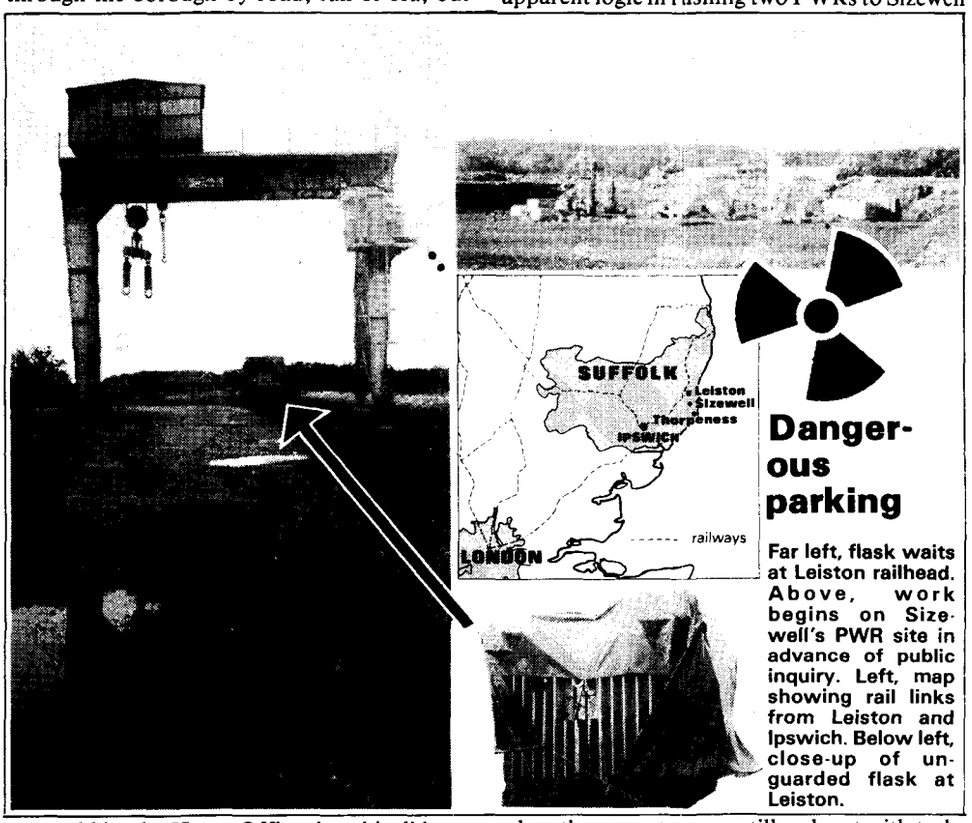
> It is not a question of whether someone will deliberately acquire it [the waste] for blackmail purposes or terrorism, but only when and how often.

Last month, Ipswich Town Council tried to pass a byelaw prohibiting the passage of waste through the borough by road, rail or sea, but were told by the Home Office that this did not lie within its powers. It is therefore contacting other authorities through whose boundaries waste passes to see if they can together force a change in the law. British Rail have told Mr Cann they will try to get the waste away faster in future and a spokesman confirmed to me: 'Plans are in hand and will be implemented as soon as it is possible to convert the flask carrying wagons for use in other types of services.' It seems to be a matter of how soon money can be found for rolling stock.

THE MAGNOX STATION at Sizewell has never worked at full strength and for some time now has been operating at no more than 40 per cent capacity. Bolts in the concrete in the reactors are corroding and there are cracks in the cooling system. Present plans for coping with an accident consist mainly of evacuating the population around Sizewell and Leiston to a comprehensive school a few fields away. When the school received an inquiry recently, they were surprised to hear they were the evacuation centre. Not that it matters much. A recent Anglia TV programme used a computer to estimate the effects of a Grade Two nuclear accident at Sizewell and came up with the news that people would be dying as far away as North London.

But what is most worrying local people is the CEGB's plan to build two US-designed pressurised water reactors (PWRs) at Sizewell. An accident at one of these could be worse than anything at the existing station. Grahame Searle of the new Stop Sizewell B Campaign points out that the CEGB currently produces some 56,000 megawatts of electricity and will soon be producing a further 13,000 megawatts, while the maximum demand of 45,000 is declining as a result of the recession. Mike Flood of Friends of the Earth emphasises the lack of any apparent logic in rushing two PWRs to Sizewell when these reactors are still so beset with technical problems. The CEGB's argument that the power stations will bring employment to the area has met considerable scepticism. Colin Ginger, local secretary of the shop workers' union USDAW and Leiston Trades Council, explains that when Sizewell A was built, local workers left secure (if less well-paid) jobs to construct it, and two years later found themselves unemployed. Once built, Sizewell A created between 350 and 400 permanent jobs, but most of these went to outside specialists.

There will be a Public Inquiry when the CEGB applies for formal consent early next year. But if you walk on the beach at Sizewell at low tide and climb on the old sea defences, at a certain point you can see work which has already begun on clearing the site for the new stations. That argues great confidence on the part of the CEGB.



Dangerous parking

Far left, flask waits at Leiston railhead. Above, work begins on Sizewell's PWR site in advance of public inquiry. Left, map showing rail links from Leiston and Ipswich. Below left, close-up of unguarded flask at Leiston.

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Inside the secret hospital

The Boynton report on Rampton hospital, published on Tuesday, has been rightly praised for the way in which it exposes the appalling regime at the hospital, which has permitted the systematic maltreatment of patients for many years. But, as JAMES CUTLER explains, Boynton tells only half the story.

RAMPTON HOSPITAL, the high-security psychiatric institution in Nottinghamshire, is back in the headlines with the publication this week of the Boynton Report. Sir John Boynton's team make scathing and well-deserved criticisms of the nursing staff at the hospital. Yet they seem remarkably unwilling to attribute another part of the blame where it belongs — to the administrators in the Department of Health and Social Security who have, over the years, allowed the disturbing conditions at Rampton to flourish. Almost all the criticisms and recommendations made by Boynton have also been made in previous reports to the DHSS, but have been consistently ignored. The difference is that all the earlier reports were highly confidential, so there was little public awareness of the DHSS's indolence.

As long ago as 1971 a confidential report by the Hospital Advisory Service (HAS) spoke of nurses at Rampton who 'not uncommonly seemed to be standing apart from patients rather than working with them'. The nurses' attitude had come about 'because of the isolated situation of the hospital' and because of the staff's 'lack of opportunity to see or experience working situations in other hospitals'. The report recommended changes in recruitment, training and promotion — none of which took place.

However, one of the HAS proposals was accepted, and with instructive results. In 1972, acting on the report's advice, the DHSS abolished the system whereby nurses worked a 14-hour day and then had the following day off; this was replaced by half-day shifts. The Prison Officers' Association, which represents nurses at Rampton, immediately started a work-to-rule and forced the Social Services Secretary, Sir Keith Joseph, into a reluctant U-turn. The old 'long-day' arrangement was reintroduced despite the fact that (in Joseph's words) 'it has hampered development of enlightened therapeutic policies and is not in the interests of the patients'.

FOLLOWING this climb-down by the DHSS another inquiry was carried out, this time by an independent expert on hospital administration called James Elliott. His report, shrouded by the Official Secrets Act and therefore totally ineffective, was a model of lucidity. He found 'a marked absence of a truly therapeutic attitude among a number of nurses'; although this would not be cured completely by changing the nurses' schedule of duty, nevertheless 'on the issue of the long-day shift, change will have to come'.

It didn't — and now, *eight years* later, we have Boynton's team, after a year-long inquiry, recommending that 'consultations should *begin* with the staff to review the present nursing shift system' (emphasis added). The long-day arrangements at Rampton have been under review since 1967, but the staff still work this shift because it suits them: on their days off many of them work at second jobs or run businesses.

In addition to the HAS report of 1971 and the Elliott report of 1973, the DHSS has also had the findings of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Committee of Higher Psychiatric Training, which reported in December 1978 that it was unable to approve Rampton as a suitable place for Senior Registrar Training in Forensic Psychiatry, 'It is questionable,' said the committee 'whether clinical practice at Rampton can rightfully be called forensic psychiatry' — an astonishing statement, considering that Rampton contains more forensic-psychiatric patients than any other institution in Britain. This was five months before Yorkshire Television's documentary, *The Secret Hospital,* which forced Whitehall to set up the Boynton review. At the time of the committee's report, the DHSS reaction was zero.

Sylvia Pourret, a Rampton patient, pictured before (left) and after (right) her incarceration in the hospital. 'She is like an animal now,' her mother says.

And inertia remained unshaken even when the DHSS received another alarm signal coming from inside the hospital itself. On 12 February 1979 — three months before the Yorkshire TV programme — Dr Ian Stewart wrote from Rampton to Norman Hale, the DHSS Under-Secretary responsible for the special hospitals. The best-qualified of all the consultants at Rampton (one of whom has never even taken an exam in psychiatry), Dr Stewart listed his anxieties about the hospital 'as a matter of urgency'. They were:

> 1. Medical staffing is wholly inadequate for the basic needs of our patients.
> 2. Care and observation, quite apart from treatment. . . is being left in the hands of nursing staff.
> 3. An attempt should be made. . . to clarify the situation as it relates to qualifications of nursing staff and the type of patient for which facilities are now available at Rampton. . .
>
> Finally, it would be quite wrong to conceal from you and from the Department my growing concern at the standards of care and treatment provided to our patients.

In reply, the Under-Secretary suggested that Dr Stewart should discuss these subjects with staff at the hospital before the DHSS could intervene. Dr Stewart was unable to do this, since he had been 'sent to Coventry' by almost the entire staff, following their discovery of a copy of his letter. The hospital's branch of the Prison Officers' Association passed a motion of 'no confidence' in him. As, at the time, he was living on the isolated hospital estate, this was a highly unnerving experience for him, intensified by a total absence of support from the Department.

The DHSS civil servants who administer Rampton have, for many years, not only avoided change but also attempted to conceal the true state of affairs at the hospital — partly by sheltering behind the Official Secrets Act, and partly by initiating a number of disinformation exercises. Faced with *The Secret Hospital,* the Department hurriedly despatched a senior information officer to Rampton to advise on image management. He recommended 'the value of special events being fed to the media' and the central storing of letters of appreciation from patients and their relatives. he also suggested that a show business personality be asked to 'adopt' Rampton. The most recent public relations effort went badly haywire last Friday when four reporters, invited to tour the hospital, were shut out by the nursing staff.

THE STAFF'S RELUCTANCE to be inspected by people from the world outside is understandable. Dr Stewart, who is now about to leave Rampton in despair, told me that the hospital 'is run for the staff's benefit rather than the patients' (as is shown by the long-day system). This view was echoed by Mike Hills, a former charge nurse, who claims that 'the hardest job I had to do at Rampton was the *Daily Mail* crossword'.

When Boynton and his team met the staff earlier this year to discuss their proposals, they were greeted with 'a mixture of hostility and indifference' according to Dr Stewart, who attended the meetings. Boynton was apparently told to 'go back and do your homework — you

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A solution to capitalism's profits crisis

CHRISTOPHER HIRD reports on the profit potential of the private health industry.

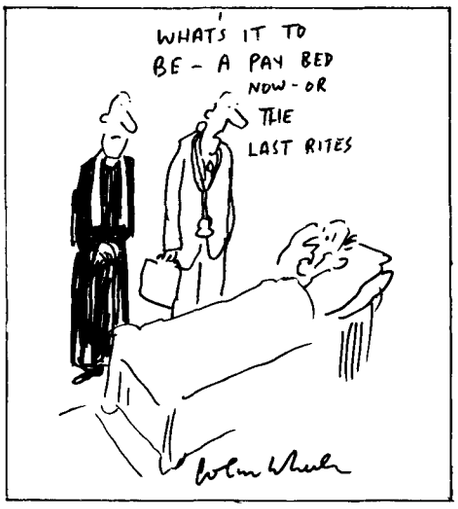
BRITAIN'S PRIVATE health business could make annual profits of £500 million if the government achieves its ambition of putting 25 per cent of health care in the private sector. This new and spectacularly profitable industry would be built almost entirely on the investment of the National Health Service, whose success would be seriously undermined by the new industry's growth. A report[1] published this week gives a rare insight into the financial success of the private health sector, a success which is considerably understated by the published accounts of the major operator in private health care — British United Provident Association (BUPA).

At the moment two companies dominate the private medical sector — BUPA and Private Patients Plan, which was formed with the help of the British Medical Association. Both of these concerns are insurance companies and both are provident associations. They have no shareholders and all their profits are ploughed back into the business to finance further growth. Like any insurance company they make their money by promising certain benefits — in their case health care — in return for an annual premium and ensuring that this income exceeds the cost of the benefits which they have to provide. Although BUPA owns some hospitals itself, most of the actual health care is undertaken by separate organisations which are, potentially, additional profit centres. At the moment, however, the major operator of hospitals in the private sector is the Nuffield Nursing Homes Trust (NNHT), a charity founded by BUPA in 1957. The combination of a provident insurance company and a charitable hospital company is a structure which maximises the financial advantage which can be enjoyed by the private health business.

LORD NUFFIELD played a central role in the formation of BUPA. The arrival of the National Health Service immediately after the Second World War posed a major threat to the provident associations which had thrived on providing the middle classes with health care before there was a free national service. To keep the provident associations in existence Lord Nuffield underwrote a unified national association incorporating most of the existing schemes, in an attempt to stem the tide of subscribers abandoning the associations for the NHS. This organisation was BUPA. The Nuffield guarantee and the reserves of the constituent schemes made it possible for BUPA to offer generous benefits and to make, in its own words in 1949,

> a not unimportant contribution to the efforts of the middle class to maintain the amenities and standards to which they have been accustomed.

At first BUPA was able to rely on the NHS's pay beds — whose charges did not, incidentally, recoup costs. But both rising demand and BUPA's own rising profits impelled it towards financing new hospitals. Because of NNHT's tax-free status, the hospitals could be paid for out of BUPA's gross income, instead of its after-tax profits. Furthermore, any profit made by the hospitals was free of tax and NNHT could collect donations from other sources, especially, for example, companies whose directors favoured private medical care. NNHT now has 30 hospitals, and total assets of more than £24 million.



At the moment NNHT makes only small profits, with most of the profit in private medicine being concentrated in the provident associations. BUPA, which accounted for almost three quarters of the total subscription income of the industry last year, received £90 million in premium income. The cost of benefits and administration amounted to £72 million, leaving an underwriting profit of £18 million. In addition, like any insurance company, BUPA makes considerable profits from investing its premium income and its accumulated profits. Investment income amounted to a further £10.4 million, giving a total pre-tax profit of £28 million.

It does not, however, appear like that in BUPA's accounts. First, the word 'profit' does not appear at all. Second, the surplus is reduced in two ways: by transfers to a special 'subscriber benefit reserve', and by estimates of claims outstanding at the end of the year.

Making such estimates is common practice in insurance, as many claims obviously straddle the end of the year. In BUPA's case these estimates have recently proved to be too high. For example, at the beginning of 1979 the total outstanding claims provision was £22 million. During the year a further £5.9 million was provided but also during that year it was discovered that over £7.5 million of previous provisions were not needed. In other words, about a third of the provision for outstanding claims at the beginning of the year was not needed and previous years' profits had been depressed by that amount. This overprovision did not go back into BUPA's profit and loss account but was transferred to the 'subscriber benefit reserve', another device which tends to understate published profits.

During 1979 BUPA's profits were reduced by an additional £9.89 million transfer to this reserve. Part of this sum is accounted for by BUPA's 'bulk group schemes' — the scheme it sells to companies to cover their employees. Some of these are profit-sharing: if, at the end of the policy's life, the claims are lower than originally expected the company receives a refund. But, in addition, the 'subscriber benefit reserve' aims to 'improve benefits to subscribers, moderate future increases in subscription rates'. It is, in other words, a general provision to hold profits in reserve so they can be used in future to keep down prices or improve benefits.

ADJUSTING BUPA'S PROFITS to account for these potential distortions is no easy matter, as detailed analyses of the 'subscriber benefit reserve' and the provision for outstanding claims are not published. However, in an attempt to get a general indication of the profitability of this sort of business, it might be fair to add something like £6 million, giving an 'adjusted' total profit of £24 million. Now, the NHS spends something like £10,000 million a year at the moment and health minister Gerald Vaughan said he would like 25 per cent of health care to be in the private sector. If this were achieved, £2,500 million worth of health care would then be in the private sector. On the basis of BUPA's profits from underwriting alone, this would suggest that the private medi-

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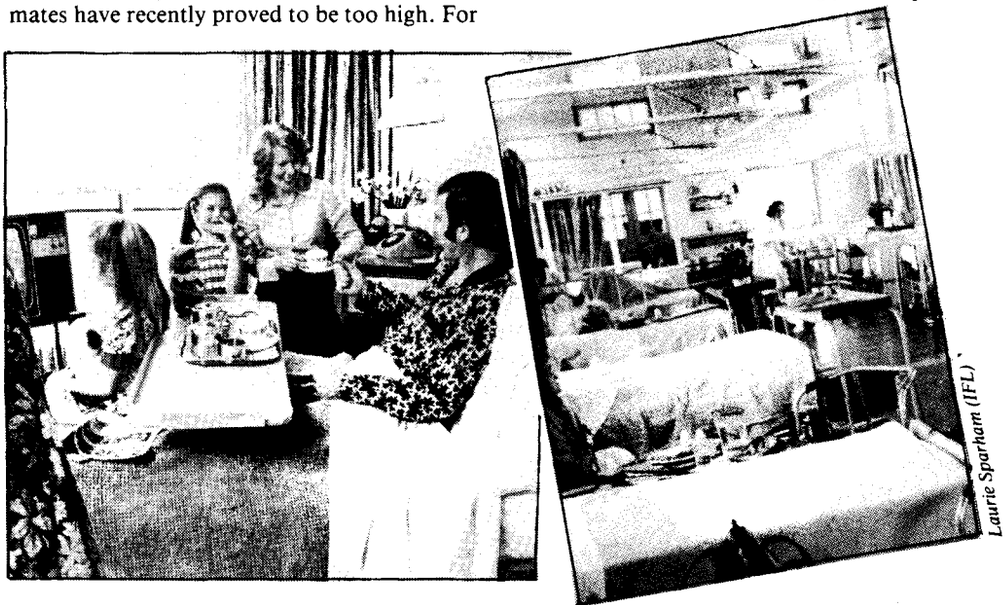

Laurie Sparham (IFL)

The cosy atmosphere of a BUPA ward (left) contrasts sharply with overcrowded NHS hospitals (right).

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Pay now, live later

PROFESSOR MARIO NUTI of Birmingham University, leading expert on Eastern Europe's economies, analyses Poland's hopes for recovery. Below, PAUL COOPER, who has just returned from Poland, reports on the dangers still faced by Solidarnosc after its court victory this week, and explains why thorough demoralisation of the communist party would spell disaster.

POLAND'S ECONOMY, already in difficult straits at mid-year, has deteriorated further and short-run prospects are poor. Economic output fell two per cent last year; and by the end of last month only half of 1980's planned output had been achieved. Agricultural production, severely affected by particularly adverse weather this year, often is not reaching state shops, due to price controls; instead it is being sold on the black market. Industrial output has suffered from strikes, meetings, the disintegration of central planning and the shortage of foreign exchange. The newly obtained five-day week in the coal industry has reduced coal output by 15-20 per cent at a stroke, lowering exports and electricity generation. Shortages of consumption goods have become more acute, especially in the industrial provinces.

Inflation, after wage settlements averaging 15 per cent, is impossible to avoid and is bound to reach the 15-20 per cent range. Foreign debts mount, and exports no longer cover the cost of servicing them. Unfinished large scale projects are mothballed and even the replacement of foreign-made machines that wear out is becoming difficult.

All this rather tarnishes Gierek's dream of a Second Poland (the first being that of Kazimierz the Great in the 14th century); moreover, the crisis is the consequence of that overambitious dream, the rush to peaks of capital accumulation exceeding 35 per cent of national income and the massive injections of foreign machines and technology, far beyond the absorption capacity of the economic system, generating disruption and waste.

THE ECONOMIC crisis, however, must be seen in perspective. Next winter is going to be hard, but people are not going to starve; meat is scarce, but its consumption has a long way to fall from the 3lb per week per head reached in 1979. In Poland, when there is no bread, there is often cake. It is of course a great disappointment that the massive accumulation undertaken in Gierek's decade and the debts incurred have not led to more significant gains in consumption, that indeed living standards are falling and the economy is so disorganised; it is not, however, a catastrophe.

The medium-run prospects of the Polish economy are good: self-sufficiency in energy, stable terms of trade, massive investment in research and development coming to fruition, highly profitable investment in the completion of many half-finished projects, international goodwill; this is more than most countries in crisis have to their credit. Polish external indebtedness is, after all, a third that of Brazil; much of the trouble comes from the short-term structure of Polish (unlike Brazilian) debt; 'rescheduling' of debt repayments seems out of the question, but if fresh long-term funds became available some 'funding' of debt would go some way towards stabilisation.

There is a crisis of a complementary type in the West, with millions unemployed and a lot of spare plant, coupled in Britain with an embarassment of financial riches — high sterling and large capital inflows. So lending to and trading with Poland makes good commercial sense, as money can be made and jobs can be filled. Poland has just borrowed $600 million from the US, and secured additional raw material supplies from the USSR on credit, but much greater amounts of foreign capital are needed if Polish problems are to be solved through external finance.

Otherwise, short-term prospects envisage a fall in the standard of living, which is reconcileable with increased political participation and militancy only if a social contract is reached, with tangible counterparts for that fall: protection for the lower paid, wage indexation, subsidies for essentials, liberalisation of agricultural production, sale of the public housing stock to the population to mop up excess purchasing power, as well as *political* counterparts.

What is at issue is whether such a social contract can be agreed in time. The government has now revealed to the public the full extent of current economic problems. Apart from a proposal to extend rationing — sound but difficult in practice — the new political force has displayed a worrying poverty of ideas. Workers want more, but have no suggestions about where more should come from, while unfinished projects and bureaucrats' villas do not lend themselves to feeding the population. The party and government bodies are discussing a reform of economic planning and institutions for introduction after the normalisation of economic and political life, presumably in a few years; Solidarity has nothing to say about it, except that its expert advisers will criticise government proposals when they are made public.

The doyen of KOR (the Social Defence Committee) intellectuals, Professor Edward Lipinski (92) — a brave man who stood up to be counted when critics of the system were fewer and far between — lectured on the economics of socialism to a packed audience in Warsaw University's Auditorium Maximum, inaugurating this year's courses of the Flying University, supposedly an underground operation. While his critique of the present system was brilliant, his recommendation of Scandinavian socialism, Oskar Lange, and the Harvard Business School provided no useful plan of action; Scandinavian socialism being an exceedingly expensive luxury few countries — certainly not Poland — can afford.

Anyway, much has been learned from experience since Lange's 1937 vision of socialism as capitalism without capitalists; in Lipinski's Harvard-guided socialism Gdansk shipworkers would be unemployed like anywhere else. In that event, the new unions would be weakened. Western experience demonstrates that with unemployment the freedom to criticise the government and organise free unions does not involve access to power.

Whatever the outcome of the Polish experiment, the system will never be the same again; successful wage claims, strikes and absenteeism — and their feared adverse effects, from inflation to economic disruption — have set permanent new limits to the Party's power, establishing a practical form of *wage-push democracy* regardless of what happens to the new unions.

The present crisis is to some extent self-correcting, in that it will steer the country away from those 'over-accumulation' policies which generated the crisis in the first place. If the Gdansk agreement can be implemented and consolidated, by neither side pushing too far, and a decent social contract worked out to get out of the economic crisis, Poland can develop an attractive socialist model. It would be a blend of market and plan, mass participation and central direction, somewhere between Hungary and Yugoslavia and above either in the spectrum of 'realised socialism.'

Solidarnosc proceeds cautiously

Keeping the peace

JERZY STRUDELSKI used to be the managing director of a huge chemical concern at Pulawy, controlling 5,800 workers. Last month they called him to a mass meeting. There was anger and a threat of strike in the air. Strudelski is a pig, one speaker announced. He has a snout, not a human face, said others. At the end of the meeting he was sacked by his workforce. Several days later, I rang the factory. Had the Minister intervened to reassert his authority? Or had the party secretary stepped in to defend a card-holding colleague? No, an embarrassed manager told me, Mr Strudelski had stopped fulfilling the functions of manager; but now everything was being done legally and an official committee was taking care of the matter.

In the growing anarchy of the last two months, the most disturbing feature has been the inability of the party to react to events. Party secretaries have not called meetings, waiting in vain for a word or sign of leadership from the top. Some half a million communists (nearly 15 per cent of the party membership) have turned in their cards. For Poland at the present time, this could prove suicidal. If Kania is girding his loins for a show of strength, however ineptly he chooses his ground, it is not altogether bad news. For if the Poles are to be masters of their own fate, the party must be seen to be capable of asserting itself.

Solidarnosc, the independent trade union movement, tends to be perceived in the West as a daring band of libertarians challenging and wresting power from a totalitarian regime. This is a half-truth. The government lost control through its own indecision and Solidarnosc was forced to step into the breach. 'People have lost all confidence in our government', Andrzej Gwiazda told me. 'Solidarnosc is a mediator between government and society.' Gwiazda, an electrical engineer, founded the original action committee to form free trade unions in Gdansk

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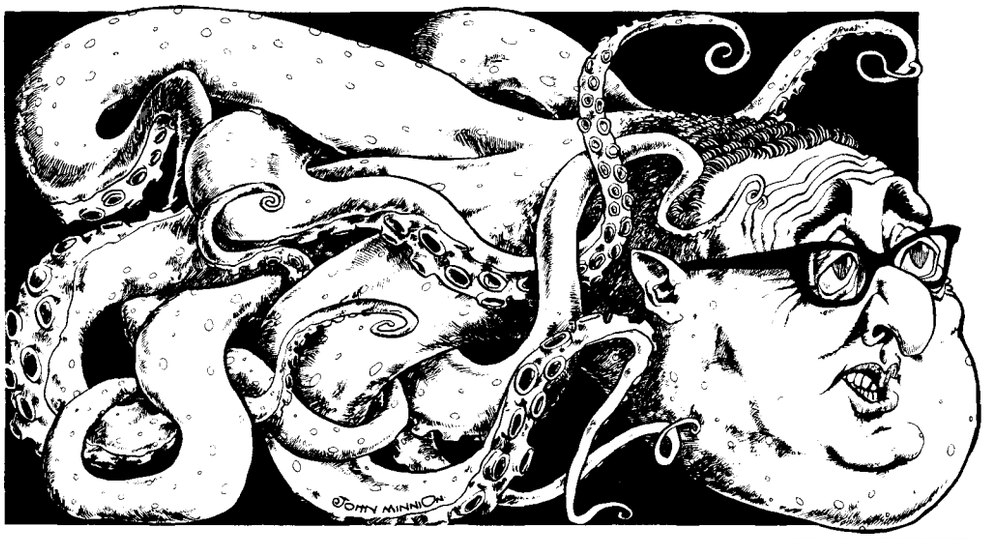

OPINION

Reagan and the octopus

GODFREY HODGSON on the real nature of Reagan's conservatism.

ONE OF THE FEW touches of comic relief in the closing stages of the Presidential campaign was the resistible rise of Henry Kissinger.

After the Republican convention, he was nowhere. The crudity of the ploy whereby he tried to push himself forward in the wake of Gerald Ford as 'Assistant President' irritated Ronald Reagan. But Henry is not one to be shamed by a snub. (I call him 'Henry', not to claim intimacy, but because I think of him as a sinister version of some comic archetype, like the buffoon in the *commedia dell'arte*.) As the campaign continued, he moved steadily through the field, until it became rare to glimpse Reagan on the tube without Henry's ingratiating smirk being visible over a shoulder.

Of course, he wouldn't have been allowed a walk-on part in Reagan's carefully-choreographed TV appearances if the candidate and his handlers had not felt that association with Henry would help. Presumably they thought that with their boy being accused of inexperience in foreign policy, it couldn't hurt to have some of Henry's 'experience' brush off on him.

HENRY, of course, is pitching to be Secretary of State again, which would have been obvious even if he hadn't denied it. (What Kissinger denies in that particular tone, like the wolf with Grandma's bonnet on, is always true.) But I don't think Reagan will take him, and if I'm right the reasons go back to some very important facts about Ronald Reagan, the brand of conservatism he represents, and the likely course of American foreign policy.

It's all the same to Henry, naturally. Like an octopus, he's had his arm round them all. He could play it the way he liked in the Kennedy White House, until they dispensed with his services. He could do it with Rockefeller or Nixon, or Ford, and he'd like nothing better than to do it with Reagan.

On the face of it, it sounds like a slick idea. Reagan is presumably aware of the fact that the Europeans and the Russians think he doesn't know much about the world. And, whatever one may happen to think of Henry, foreign policy has been his life study.

If Reagan were Kissinger — if, that is, he were a man with no definable core of ideological loyalty — he would jump at the idea. If Reagan were Nixon, he would do it again. But Reagan is not a variant of the kind of political animal Nixon was, and he comes from a quite different tradition. Going back to the First World War, American conservatism has been divided on foreign policy. There have been many swirling cross-currents, of course: many changes of position, many confusing names and slogans. But the real divide has been as wide and rugged as the Appalachian mountains, and located in roughly the same position. There are the Eastern conservatives who look towards Europe and are called 'internationalists', and there are Western and Mid-Western conservatives who look towards Asia, and are the spiritual heirs of isolationism.

THE 'ISOLATIONISTS' had no insuperable objections to US military and diplomatic intervention. They were in favour of sending Marines to Mexico and the Caribbean, in favour of the US presence in the Philippines and Panama, in favour of commercial and diplomatic expansion in the Far East. Several of their philosophers and spokesmen specifically borrowed the language of 'Manifest Destiny' and pushed the western frontiers across 8,000 miles of the Pacific. To many 'isolationists' the US could rightly look forward to future domination in China. That was why they railed against the 'loss' of China in 1949. MacArthur was their hero, not the 'European' Eisenhower, protégé of the detested George Catlett Marshall, and after the detumescence of MacArthur they transferred to Robert Taft.

At last in 1964 they got their own candidate, Barry Goldwater, in the teeth of the Eastern Establishment. Goldwater fizzled, and they had to accept Nixon, Californian by origin but an Eastern internationalist by choice and philosophy.

INSTINCT in the British foreign policy Establishment is to fall in with any Washington orthodoxy. Already, no doubt, suitable noises will be being made about the importance of decisive leadership in the Alliance, and the pleasure of having an American administration which so closely resembles the home life of our own dear Maggie. But Reagan is not likely to turn for foreign policy advice to men bred in the Anglophile tradition.

He didn't talk much about the Alliance during his campaign. It may be suspected that his interest is in *American* power, and he has already alluded in public to the 'happier time' when Presidents did not leave the soil of the Republic. In his next breath, he said he was making no pledge not to go abroad: but he grew up in a place and time where no great store was set by European allies.

There has been one immense, perhaps surprising exception to the traditional xenophobia of the western conservative tradition: Israel. In the conservative mental map, Israel looms larger than all West Europe. China looms large, too: a shadowy presence, and a temptation. The USSR, of course, looms largest of all, as an implacable enemy, dedicated to the overthrow of the United States, source of any and every development impeding the God-decreed march of America to manifest destiny. Reagan has said that he considers the Soviet Union as the source of all radical movements in the world. He will find that he is wrong, of course. But not before he has done a great deal of harm. It is that kind of mistake which may be worse, and more dangerous, than crime.

On the surface, Reagan's foreign policy may not look so different from Nixon's. But the underlying assumptions are as distant as Los Angeles is from New York. That is why, if after all I am wrong, and Reagan does take Kissinger, it will be a Kissinger who is ready — not for the first time — to dance to a very different tune. If he does not, it will be because for Reagan and his people, even Kissinger is not sufficiently conservative.

Godfrey Hodgson's study of the American Presidency, All Things to All Men, *has just been published by Weidenfeld at £8.95.*

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Health

Contd from p.9

cine industry could reap total profits of over £500 million.

There are some obvious objections to this calculation. First, the provident associations are insurance companies: they make money by minimizing risk. In the case of health care, this mean avoiding people likely to be ill. BUPA specifically restricts claims 'arising from any geriatric, psychogeriatric conditions' to 180 days in any year. New registrations from people over 65 years are refused and PPP has a 25 per cent surcharge of people enrolling after their sixtieth birthday. Bluntly, those most in need (half of the NHS beds are used by geriatric, psychiatric and maternity patients) cannot benefit from the private sector. From the association's point of view, expansion should draw in poorer risks. Insofar as growth drew in younger people, however, it would reduce the risk.

Second, such profits must attract others into the business. Indeed, the provident associations are already finding things much more competitive: new group company schemes especially are being sold more cheaply. Against this, there is the prospect of significant growth as the NHS deteriorates more rapidly and there is scope for developing new profitable health care insurance packages that give the private sector the job of 'topping-up' on normal NHS cover.

In some respects the £500 million tends to be an under-estimate. It excludes investment income. It assumes that treatment in the private sector mirrors that in the NHS, whereas the evidence is that private practice has a much higher proportion of high-value work in it: a quarter of all costs are payment to surgeons and specialists. This means that if 25 per cent of all health care were transferred to the private sector, this could account for far more than a quarter of current NHS spending.

Two things are clear. First, this growth can only be achieved at the expense of the NHS. The NHS pays virtually all the costs of training the doctors and nurses who will work in the private sector. And, as the private sector grows by taking the least ill members of the population, the burden on the NHS increases: it is only possible to make the private medicine business profitable because the NHS takes the worst risks.

Second, businesses and investors have not been slow to see the potential of the private health sector as a major profit centre in the current morass of capitalism. The Bermuda-owned Wellington Hospital in London, for instance, makes £1.14 of profit for every £1 it pays in wages: very few businesses in Britain today have such a rate of exploitation. Profit margins are 24 per cent; return on capital 31 per cent. Last month a group of Yorkshire doctors came to the City of London to raise £3.3 million to build a 45 bed private hospital. The share issue was oversubscribed; Barclays Bank and the Industrial and Commercial Finance Corporation coughed up £1.1 million. ICFC in particular — owned by the Bank of England and the clearing banks — is generally thought of as being in business to finance new industrial development. Its new venture will, surely, be described as part of the essential expansion of the British economy into service, but its private success will only be achieved at public cost.

[1] *NHS: Condition Critical. CIS Anti-report No 26,* 95p from 9 Poland Street W1.

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Poland

Contd from p.10

some two years ago; he is now an active member of the Solidarnosc leadership. 'Every day we deal with angry delegations of workers who come from all over Poland', he went on. 'We have to calm them down. We are realists. We know we can't expect too much from the government.'

In August, many factories wanted to put in demands for free elections, but Walesa's negotiating committee ignored the proposal. At one of the shipyard debates a poet called for the total abolition of censorship. A Solidarnosc leader answered immediately that it was the last thing the Czechs did before the Russians sent in their tanks. Bogdan Borusewicz, a founding member of the dissident intellectual group, KOR, who is also a Solidarnosc executive, thought that the unions should not involve themselves in managing factories. The leadership did not want a witch-hunt of managers, he said; but he conceded that it could not stand in the way of workers who had serious grievances and had decided to get rid of particular individuals.

OTHER UNCERTAINTIES remain. Gdansk has thrown up political leaders, but industry's bulk remains in the centre and the south. Regional rivalries haven't yet harmed Solidarnosc, but the party will surely exploit them. Walesa's confident smile boasts of his seven or ten million members — two or three times the size of the party, but union leaders are aware of the temporary nature of their power.

Immediate collision has been avoided, and during the next few months any pay rises or other little benefits will be seen as concessions won by Solidarnosc. A touching example of people's faith in the new union was given by a young woman in a factory where disabled people make gloves: previously, she and her friends would have been afraid to agitate for their rights. It would have looked subversive. Her factory was one of 200 specially designed for disabled workers, and it was equipped with a gym and a full-time physiotherapist. But factory pay had a large piecework element, so too many people going to the gym would have slowed production, and cut down wages. Sick leave was a similar problem: once, workers were sent to sanatoria by their doctors, but the process had grown up of docking annual holidays. The factory had its plan to fulfil, whatever the health of the workers. But they believed in Solidarnosc, they said. It would be democratic, and would have elections, unlike the old union.

Now that the problem of registration has been dealt with, the government may see the value of constructive deals with Solidarnosc. One of the most unusual events in Poland this September was the unauthorised collaboration of a group of Silesian factories. Strikes had upset their supplies, and because of political upheaval the pulse of central planning was beating very weakly. A group of managers in the Opole district established informal contacts, and pooled their resources of labour energy and raw materials — with the full support of their workers, who appreciated the need to keep production going in chaotic times.

If the government has imagination, it could respond to the Opole spirit, and help it to spread. Not that imagination's tasks would end there, for the government must also strike a fair bargain with Poland's peasant farmers, and it shows no sign of being ready for that yet.

Rampton

Contd from p.8

don't understand us', and his criticisms of the patients' degrading regime were dismissed as 'just piddling details'.

The details referred to include the fact that patients are made to stand naked in the corridors while changing clothes; they are made to wear ties at all times; they are prohibited from talking at mealtimes; and they are not allowed furniture, pictures or personal possessions in the rooms where they are incarcerated for up to 12 hours a night.

Criticising the geographical, professional and social isolation of the hospital, Boynton concludes that Rampton 'appears to have been in a backwater, and the main currents of thought about the care of mental patients have passed it by'.

Even so, Boynton rejects the idea of closing Rampton. But the report proposes several reforms which are intended to wrest power from the Prison Officers' Association. The POA-dominated committee which at present decides hospital policy should be scrapped; the hospital should have a medical superintendent who would provide 'coordination and leadership for the hospital as a whole' and who would be backed by a Heads of Department Committee. Boynton hopes that the staff's self-perpetuating attitudes might be eroded by the appointment of charge nurses from other hospitals (something that has never happened in Rampton's 60-year history), with secondments and travelling scholarships for staff 'to gain experience of alternative approaches to psychiatric care'. Boynton also proposes a review of training programmes, the replacement of the prison officer-style uniform and, finally, a temporary review board 'to ensure that our recommendations are implemented'.

Even if Boynton's recommendations are imposed on Rampton, with the aid of the review board, their intentions may nonetheless be subverted. A recent exemple of this came with a document called 'Nursing Procedure for the Seclusion of Patients', which was sent round the wards at Rampton. It sets the times for feeding, exercise and medication, and stipulates that the patient must be visited at least once every 15 minutes and that their period of seclusion must be 'kept to the minimum commensurate with safety'. These guidelines were introduced at all the special hospitals after MIND (the National Association for Mental Health) took a case of seclusion at Broadmoor to the European Commission on Human Rights. However, added to the Rampton version of the document, in the chief nursing officer's own handwriting, are the words: 'This is a guideline to an administrative process only — not guidelines to nursing care'.

Similarly, the changes in nurses' training and the secondment to other hospitals are likely to have only a limited effect. Several former student nurses told me that when they left Rampton's training school to work on the wards they were instructed to 'forget all that nonsense — go and count the bars on the windows'.

THE BUREAUCRATS will certainly feel relieved to have escaped censure from the Boynton report. The nurses feel resentful at it and at the continuing police inquiries, which were started after Yorkshire TV's allegations: three nurses have now been charged and 36 other cases of alleged brutality are already on the desk of the Director of Public Prosecutions, with more expected to follow.

The views of patients are harder to come by; but even if Boynton's 'new deal' succeeds it will have come too late for many of them. Sylvia Pourret, who is mentally handicapped and mute, lived at home for 29 years without ever causing problems or showing signs of violence. When her father developed serious spinal illness, her mother found that she could no longer look after Sylvia as well. Sylvia was sent to Leybourne Grange, a subnormality hospital in Kent, which decided to send her on to Rampton. Her mother agreed to this transfer when she was told that Rampton was a special hospital where her daughter would receive 'special' treatment. No one mentioned maximum security.

The photograph on the left on page 8 shows Sylvia before she went into the hospital. The picture on the right shows her as she is now, after seven years at Rampton: she has lost all her teeth and she is always, according to her mother, in a distressed state. 'She is like an animal now,' Mrs Pourret says.

It is a scandalous absurdity that someone like Sylvia, with the mental age of a 5 or 6 year-old child, should be locked up in a maximum security institution surrounded by a Mountbatten fence, floodlights and sirens. She and her fellow patients who are severely mentally handicapped should be moved to well-staffed open mental handicap hospitals near their homes. The patients at Rampton who are considered 'medium security risks' should be treated in the small regional units now being set up within the National Health Service. As for the 150 or so of Rampton's 800 patients that *are* extremely dangerous, those who are diagnosed as psychopaths and therefore by definition untreatable should serve prison sentences for their offences, and those who are diagnosed as mentally ill should be treated in the more humane and more expert settings of Broadmoor or Park Lane special hospitals. When these phased transfers have been carried out, then the true remedy to Rampton's problems — its permanent closure — can take place.

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Scottish Diary

☐ Readers of the London press sometimes fail to appreciate the differences between Scottish law and the variety enforced south of the border. However, the Lords debate on a recent amendment to the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill provides a useful object lesson. An amendment by Robin Cook MP finished off the ridiculous anomaly under which private homosexual acts have been legal in England and Wales, but illegal up here. But their Scottish lordships fought a notable defensive action.

Lord Galpern, a former Labour MP, stated his view that to be gay is to be in thrall to an illness, that should be met by 'some medical effort'. Lord Ferrier, celebrating his own possession of 'a wider range of understanding of people than others', informed the House that the Scottish people 'dislike and despise homosexual behaviour', though he cited no quantitative evidence. The amendment survived by 59 votes to 48 — but not before it had been further amended to limit the possible number of persons enjoying the act to two.

Lord Lauderdale, noting that opposition in the Commons would have been stronger had not the lower House been 'decimated by a garden party', referred to Mr Cook's proposal as 'an orgy law', and said that it

> meant that things done in private could be done in a whole roomful of people — a room as big as the Albert Hall if necessary.

Scotland has been kept free from the possibility of such nightmares.

☐ Posturing over the question of council-house sales in Scotland seems capable of obscuring the far weightier issue of housing expenditure cuts — proposals which will reinforce the country's position as one of the worst-housed in Europe. Because housing finance here doesn't depend on individual project approval, Heseltine's freeze cannot be enforced outright, but the Scottish Office is nonetheless doing its best. A big cut in the Housing Support Grant is due to be announced this month, and the government has just imposed a moratorium until next April on all housing-association capital spending outside Strathclyde. In Strathclyde, a handful of projects *may* obtain approval. Latest figures show that Scotland's public-sector waiting list now stands at 180,000 households — and is growing.

☐ The commencement recently in Newcastle of an inquiry into the Atomic Energy Authority's plan to test-drill for possible nuclear-waste disposal in the Cheviot hills gives one a familiar sinking feeling. The *Sunday Times* was wrong to suggest that it 'set the pattern for future applications elsewhere in Britain'. That pattern has been set already by the 21-day Mullwharcher Inquiry which took place earlier this year in Ayr.

The remit of the Reporter, Mr William Campbell, was carefully restricted to go no further than the local planning implications of a few boreholes, and up to six portable buildings. He did agree to hear evidence on the true concern of local people — which is that the boreholes would be no more than a preliminary step towards plans for permanent disposal of long-lived radioactive waste. But he said he would take no account of such evidence when reporting to the Secretary of State for Scotland. On that basis his recommendations can be safely predicted in advance. How can anyone object to a few harmless holes and moveable prefabs? The game at the Cheviots Inquiry is identical, and the protestors who interrupted the first day's proceedings with songs are making the correct point. The inquiry is a farce, deserving nothing but ridicule.

☐ This household has made a decision. When the next electricity bill arrives — and soon — we shall send the South of Scotland Electricity Board a cheque for 80 per cent of the bill, and explain that the rest will be paid into a trust fund where it will be held 'until such time as the SSEB show themselves responsible to the public by . . . ceasing the production, distribution and supply of nuclear-generated electricity'. Roughly 20 per cent of Scotland's electricity is nuclear.

The South of Scotland Anti-Nuclear Consumer Campaign already has £400 of withheld money, and knows of at least 50 consumers who are willing to withhold — including, for instance, William Wolfe, president of the SNP. Electricity boards are susceptible to pressure from their consumers: the North of Scotland Hydro-Electricity Board recently abandoned an 11 per cent surcharge placed on the island communities after many consumers — including the Islands Authorities — declined to pay up.

☐ The people of the Western Isles are just now fighting against NATO's chameleon-like plans to extend Stornoway airport on Lewis. *Keep NATO Out,* a local group, have just published *Islands at Risk* (£1 from 5 Mill Road, Stornoway) which charts their campaign. The Ministry of Defence first talked of expanding RAF Stornoway in 1977. Then the plans were to extend one end of the runway, to strengthen a taxiway, and to provide aircraft hardstandings and various fuel facilities. By May 1979 the plans had been scaled up to include an extension to the *other* end of the runway, a completely new taxiway, and the addition of sea defences. Six months later they were 'refined' to include at least 10 'hardened' aircraft shelters 30 feet high — along with radar and other navigational aids, barracks and married quarters. Total estimated cost has risen from £6 million to £40 million inside three years, which isn't just inflation even in a Thatcherite world,

The MoD claims that expansion involves no change of status for the airport as a NATO 'forward operating base', and that it will only be used for exercises. Military aircraft would 'only be deployed forward if the military situation demanded'. Local people may be forgiven for their suspicions that the real purpose is to make Stornoway, de facto, into a military base.

☐ Britain's cycling community has suffered a sad loss with the death of *Freewheeling,* an Edinburgh-based monthly magazine started last year by a small group of cyclists. Run as a workers' co-op, it produced 14 issues and reached a sale of 10,000-plus. Its editorial staff of three worked for £35 each a week: it was aimed not at cycle-touring fanatics, but at the growing number of people who commute and take occasional holidays by bike.

Ian Maxwell, one of *Freewheeling*'s editorial team, attributes the demise to marketing inexperience, high interest rates, and to being 'a small publication in a big game'. *Cycling World,* a magazine launched a few months earlier and owned, along with *Camping World, Caravanning World, Mountain World* (and, more recently, *Vole*) by Stone Industrial Publications, is still alive, and according to its publishers is selling 30,000 copies a month, unaudited. It has survived chiefly because Stones, on the strength of their other publications, were able to come quickly to a distribution agreement with Smiths, Menzies and the other big firms on distribution: *Freewheeling* lacked the clout to do so. The tragedy is that *Cycling World* is a twee and tired magazine, borrowing features from its equally uninspired companions — whereas *Freewheeling* was often fresh and stimulating. Any government seriously concerned to extend the diversity of our press should surely begin by intervening in the distribution industry to ensure that the odds should be less heavily stacked against small, independent newcomers.

☐ John Lennon's fortieth birthday, announced recently as though it were his death, reminds me of a tale told by a friend. On 2 December 1969, inspired by a vigorous campaign against the Springbok rugby tour, 130 Aberdeen University students (of whom my friend was one) disrupted the local Springbok game by running on to the pitch, shinning up goal-posts and the like. They held up play for 10 minutes before 30 of them were taken and dumped miles away from the ground, and another 100 were arrested, photographed, locked up and charged with breach of the peace. Months later the 100 heard from the Procurator Fiscal that they had to pay a £15 fine each. One student optimist wrote to the Beatles asking if they would do a charity concert in Aberdeen to raise the money, After a period of silence, he rang up, and was told that Lennon had that morning put a £1500 cheque in the post, but didn't want any publicity. Was some of my adolescent admiration politically justified?

Rob Edwards

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐The sale is the result of a campaign by Cllr George Tremlett, who represents the Twickenham constituency on the GLC, and ends fears that if Labour got control of the GLC in the future it might interfere with the freehold, and even use Fulwell as a 'workers' golf course', which, said Cllr Tremlett, would effectively have meant the end of the local Fulwell Golf Club. — *Richmond and Twickenham Times* (R. Burnett)

☐ Grateful thanks SS Jude & Matthew for help with tax problems. — Personal ad in *Daily Telegraph* (Ian Kichman)

☐Mr Oates has been receiving letters of protest since the nursery's closure at the end of December was announced. 'I'm not a very literate man, but I know a literate hand when I see one,' he said. 'Some people have had letters typed by their secretaries.' — *Observer* (Mrs E. Grazynski)

☐Reagan has made enough offhand remarks about the use of military force, however vague, to scare people, especially women. — *Sunday Times* (Tony Ades)

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

Chinese take-away

I have mentioned before in these pages, and with a deep gratitude that increases down the years, a married couple called Edwards who became an adopted aunt and uncle and who lavished kindnesses and love on me from 1922, when our paths first crossed, on. I had at that time, and aged twelve, as little to recommend me as I have now, when people, though too polite to shudder away, do tend suddenly to remember appointments elsewhere ('Is that the time? Heavens, I must fly!'). I suppose that I smiled quite a lot, which is socially more acceptable than frowning, but as a pleasing accomplishment it was a poor thing to compensate for selfishness, clumsiness, gluttony, lack of tact, boorishness and the many other unattractive disadvantages not always absent in young people growing up. I have sometimes wondered why on earth they bothered with me and I think it was perhaps because of a sad gap in their lives for their only child, a girl called May, had died young and of TB, and those who ceaselessly fret and fuss and complain about the undoubted horrors of modern life can cheer themselves up by running over in their minds the names of the numerous and appalling illnesses that exist no more or, existing, can be speedily cured. And when they've done that, they can become even sunnier by reflecting on the fact that, a mere forty-five years ago, many people in the country were, literally, starving and that now starvation is, for us at least, virtually a thing of the past. I have other comforting thoughts which I shall supply from time to time.

The Edwards, who lived in London (just off Kensington High Street and finely placed for Mudie's Library, Barkers, the Circle Line and that delightful No 9 bus), were tremendous theatre-goers who could be counted on to have seen 'everything', and often twice, and as, from the age of four, most of my waking moments and thoughts were concerned with this or that star performer, this formed an additional bond. Every school holidays I spent three or four days with them (comfy, roomy flat and with two servants, then nothing of a novelty, living in, and a married chauffeur living out) and it is to their kindness that I owe many prime theatrical treats, among them *No No Nanette,* Cochran revues, Marie Tempest and endless afternoons at the Coliseum where all the best music hall acts turned up.

The Edwards did not confine themselves or their theatre-going activities to London and often took themselves off for a few days to the South Coast where almost every town of any size had its theatre (many had two or more), complete either with a repertory company or a tour of some successful London production *(The Scarlet Pimpernel* and *The Only Way* made fortunes on the road, as we buskers have it). And one Sunday evening in the late 1920s and at, I think, Brighton, my friends spotted that a Special Concert was to be given, 'with a host of famous names', the names prudently not being announced until the audience had paid for their tickets and were actually in the hall, and seated. The Edwards hastened, naturally, to this promising-sounding feast and there a sadness awaited them, for one of the famous names was famous indeed. It is very distressing when a once great star is a star no more and plainly on the skids (wasn't it Mae Murray who was found, destitute and penniless and starving in a back street of Los Angeles?) and among the items in this Sunday concert there was 'songs by Hayden Coffin', a name which once shone out in what were then known as bulbs. For many years he had been an immensely popular leading singer and a handsome star of stars in such musicals as *Dorothy, A Gaiety Girl* (at, surprisingly, the Prince of Wales's), *The Geisha, The Quaker Girl, Véronique* and *A Country Girl.* His voice had, more or less, gone (he was by then in his 60s) but he did what he could with it and, when all was over, the Edwards hurried round to see and congratulate and, if it doesn't sound too patronising, comfort him. He was, they said, charm itself, accepted his vanished success with dignity and announced that the sum to be paid him for his evening's efforts had been agreed at two guineas.

He died a few years later, in 1935, and I shall always be grateful to him for having, in his 1930 autobiography, passed on to us details of a remarkable contraption, the very name of which sets one wildly surmising as to its purpose. I am referring, of course, to the Ammoniaphone, a boon that was introduced to a fascinated public at an Ammoniaphone Concert at the St James's Hall in 1884. It seems that the Ammoniaphone looked vaguely like a white metal flute and could apparently either be blown into head on, so to speak, or, like a flute, sideways. What dulcet sounds it produced we are not told but the inventor of the Ammoniaphone claimed that by dint of inhaling into the lungs various gases, and presumably ammoniacal ones, contained in the tube and which were identical, though how I cannot follow, with the pure air only obtainable in Italy, the home of beautiful voices, a greater richness and depth would be added to the vocal tones. At the Ammoniaphone Concert, the Ammoniaphone inventor blew a series of arpeggios and grace notes and trills vigorously into his instrument, though whether he then sang in order to demonstrate his improved cords is not revealed. It was well known to the Victorians, never very quick to spot an obvious and complete charlatan, that ammonia, the pungent compound of nitrogen and hydrogen, was invaluable for washing your navy blue linens or freshening your velvets, but here was a brand new use for it and, apparently, eager buyers flocked to the Ammoniaphone shop in Oxford Street to purchase their very own Ammoniaphone. Although I have searched the Army and Navy Catalogue without success, something tells me that somewhere in Harrods there is an Ammoniaphone counter and I intend to stock up with Ammoniaphones (the ideal answer to the Christmas present problem) at once.

It is not forgotten by some of us that Hayden Coffin also appeared in a musical called *San Toy* (Chinesey, and with Marie Tempest as leading lady) at Daly's, a musical for which, though before my time, I have, for a peculiar reason, a warm feeling. Early in my teaching career, I was appointed a House Tutor, or under-Housemaster, at an Oundle School boarding house. There were, it being the 30s, a large assembly of housemaids to look after us and, passing through the boys' quarters one evening, I heard a strange sighing sound and a clatter of limbs and I found to my dismay that one of the maids, Rhoda by name, had, returning from her evening out, decided to faint rather elaborately and now lay, a sad and forlorn human mound, upon the floor and in full public view. I hastened, in my gentlemanly way, forward, heaved Rhoda up as best I could and, clutching her firmly, was just wondering what best to do with her inert form when the whole of the junior half of the house passed by on their way up to bed. When this kind of thing used to occur in plays and, particularly, farces, the stage direction that followed this kind of happening just said TABLEAU. The little affair made quite a talking point for a number of weeks.

There was, in *San Toy,* a narrative song — one of those that tells a story, such as Cole Porter's 'Miss Otis Regrets' and Mr Coward's 'Nina' — concerning Rhoda Rye, described as a London lass, 'taking and trim and tiny, who wished to gather the upper class to a tea-shop charming and Chinee'. Rhoda, the lyric tells us, then erected a pagoda in the Strand and dressed up in Chinese costume, complete with comb. After this preamble, there came the chorus.

> Rhoda, Rhoda ran a Pagoda
> Selling tea and syrup and soda,
> Many a maiden met a man
> At the pretty Pagoda Rhoda ran.

It was, clearly, the first instance of a Chinese take-away, except that what male customers took away was on two legs, and alive.

You'll want to know what happened to Rhoda Rye herself. Well, she got snapped up by none other than the Duke of Kensington Gardens, a constant visitor to her Pagoda, became his Duchess and pretended that she had never in her life even *heard* of a Pagoda. But what eventually happened to my Rhoda, I cannot, alas, say.

Roger Woddis

Best Foot Forward

'An unmitigated folly.' — The Times *on the Labour Party leadership election result.*

When reckless Labour stoops to folly,
And causes decent chaps to pray,
What balm can soothe our melancholy,
What words explain it all away?

A leftward lurch induces terror,
And threatens values we conserve;
If such a choice was not in error,
It indicates a loss of nerve.

A sailor loth to prove his mettle,
Who pales to hear the timber split,
Does not expect the ship to settle,
And shows his faith by leaving it.

An energetic Opposition
Should always be our first concern,
But such an untoward decision
Gives tender souls a nasty turn.

The sight of all our hopes negated
Wrings bitter tears from every eye;
A barking dog must feel frustrated
To see the caravan roll by.

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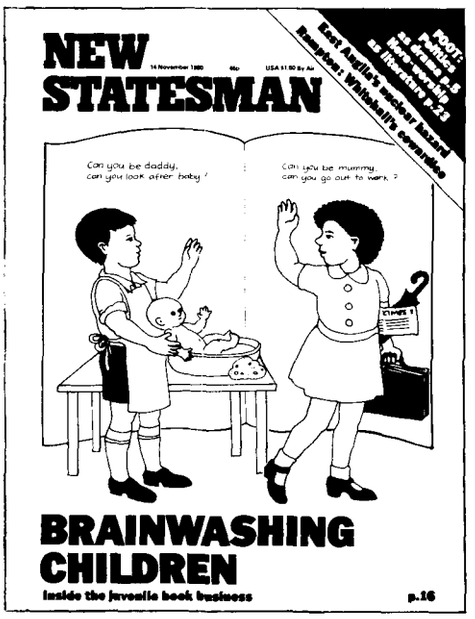
Race, sex & class in children's books

Between now and Christmas we shall be publishing a series of articles on 'sexism', 'racism' and class bias in children's books. Contributors will include authors, critics, librarians and publishers. The aim is to explore the controversies currently surrounding a highly sensitive and vitally important area of writing and book production.

Among the questions disputed are the following:

- **Is it the job of the children's writer to reflect actual social attitudes or 'progressive' aspirations?**
- **Are the moral obligations of writers for children different in this respect from those of writers addressing adults?**
- **Are 'sexism' and 'racism' useful terms? Can they be defined?**
- **What is a 'stereotype' — a rigid image of the sexes as they are, or popular prejudice about them, or a sanitised projection of the future?**
- **Do publishers, librarians and schools need Codes of Conduct or Guidelines?**
- **Are children's authors unjustifiably complacent about their own liberal attitudes?**
- **Is it insulting, or 'Eurocentric', to describe an African tribe as 'primitive' — or as a 'tribe'?**
- **Are vigilantes currently doing a Mrs Whitehouse — in reverse? Is the effect of their crusading to impose a new orthodoxy and stifle creativity?**
- **Is a bookshop engaged in a form of censorship if it refuses to stock or order a title in demand?**
- **Is the Equal Opportunities Commission justified in intervening in the field of fiction and imaginative literature read by schoolchildren?**


NEW STATESMAN
Can you be daddy, can you look after baby?
Can you be mummy, can you go out to work?
BRAINWASHING CHILDREN
inside the juvenile book business
p.16

From the McGraw-Hill (USA) 1974 Guidelines for the editorial staff and authors

1. NO: Pioneers moved West, taking their wives and children with them.
   YES: Pioneer men and women moved West, taking their children with them.
2. NO: The average American drinks his coffee black.
   YES: The average American drinks black coffee.
3. NO: The fair sex
   YES: Women
4. NO: Man made
   YES: Artificial, synthetic, manufactured
5. NO: Fireman. Foreman
   YES: Firefighter. Superviser
6. NO: Henry Harris is a shrewd lawyer and his wife Ann is a striking brunette.
   YES: The Harrises are an attractive couple. Henry is a handsome blond and Ann is a striking brunette.
   'Sometimes men should be shown as quiet and passive, or fearful and indecisive, or illogical and immature. Similarly, women should sometimes be shown as tough, aggressive and insensitive.'

Mental Hygiene: Rosemary Stones's 'Criteria for the Evaluation of Racism', *Children's Book Bulletin No 1. June 1979.* **Questions to ask . . . about authors:**

1. a) Is the author familiar with the group about which he/she writes through extended co-operative activity?
   b) Does the author have empathy with the group?
2. a) Does the author have scholarship related to the topic being discussed?
   b) Does the author have a critical attitude towards conventional knowledge promoted even by the most respected institution of learning?
3. a) Are the author's previous publications comparatively free of overt distortions, omissions and bias?
   b) Is the author's bias expressed in more subtle terms?
   c) What has previously been the author's audience?
4. a) How and where has the author acquired his/her education?
   b) What is the author's social origin?

No more firemen

The Educational Publishers' Council is collaborating with the Equal Opportunities Commission to produce Guidelines identifying sexism and non-sexism in children's literature. DAVID CAUTE criticises the whole exercise.

SOME 30 YEARS ago, when McCarthyism was rampant in America, the majority of publishers in the United States hastily vetted their schoolbooks, eradicated favourable references to socialism and the welfare state, and begged for seals of approval from the vigilantes. In the 1970s, by contrast, the commercially significant lobbying came from progressive pressure groups, most notably feminists. Once again, with equally swift opportunism, McGraw-Hill and other publishers hurried to protect their sales by issuing in-house Guidelines to children's editors and authors. The English language was to be purged of its male-chauvinist usages and connotations — no more 'firemen', only 'fire fighters', no more 'housewives', only 'homemakers', no more 'ladies', only 'women'.

The bad news is that the Educational Publishers' Council of the British Publishers' Association, impressed by the Americans, has set up a working party to produce advisory Guidelines for teachers and publishers on how to eliminate 'sexism' and 'sexual stereotyping' from the classroom. The working party is not confining its reforming zeal to picture-books for toddlers; it will also pass broad judgment on how to evaluate works of history, fiction and poetry (including the 'classics' of literature) offered to teenagers in secondary schools. An equally interesting facet of the operation is the involvement of the Equal Opportunities Commission, a semi-autonomous government body set up under the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975.

John Davies, Director of the Educational Publishers' Council, explains that the working party grew out of a seminar organised last year by publishers. Even so, the idea of the working party was proposed by Wilf Knowles, then head of the EOC's education department. What is more, six of the 13 members of the working party have been nominated by the EOC, whereas the publishers have only four representatives and the writers' unions merely three (originally two). As one publisher put it: 'The EOC gave us a nudge and we took the hint.' Internal evidence suggests that the EOC's six nominees are pressing the radical case — not surprising if one ponders the known outlook of Rosemary Stones (see her excellent feature article in next week's NS) or of Frances Coton of the Campaign to Impede Sexual Stereotyping of the Young.

One of the EOC's central purposes is to ensure that neither sex receives 'less favourable treatment' than the other. With this aim in mind the Commission distributes printed and audio-visual aids to foster sexually progressive teaching attitudes; it also publishes a guide recommending those careers manuals that afford girls equal opportunities — an intervention not merely desirable but also justified by the advertising provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act. But there exists no provision in the Act to justify the EOC leaping into the cultural and semantic minefield surrounding fiction, literature and history; nor should our publishers close their frightened ranks to

Contd on Page 19

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1. Patriarchal attitudes: the 'classics'

MARION GLASTONBURY takes a critical view of the sexual and racial attitudes conveyed to successive generations of young readers in the children's 'classics'.

GRANT A WOMAN'S wish and she gets a sausage on the end of her nose. Denying the suit of a prince, the Emperor's daughter is soiled and shamed by the kisses of a swineherd. When the magic flounder whose life has been spared asks the fisherman what he needs, the response of his wife rises in a steady crescendo of covetousness from the desire for bread in a bread bin to the final hubris of aspiring to rule the world.

Best-sellers attain 'classic' status, in defiance of literary criteria, by virtue of an appeal to children which strikes an answering chord in parents, teachers, librarians and media men, casting a magic spell which, it is generally agreed, only pompous killjoys would bother to analyse.

The latent content of traditional tales is interpreted by anthropologists as an encoded message, transmitting beliefs and practices from generation to generation, and by Freudians as the interraction of guilt and desire, contradictions made coherent.

Commentators invariably assume that they are dealing with a universal grammar, what Joseph Campbell called 'the picture-language of the soul' and Northrop Frye 'the vast shadow of a total human consensus'.

Yet, myths and legends do *not* speak with one voice for all of us, as the most cursory glance at the allocation of roles will show. The child's own drama of self-realisation through metamorphosis, the struggle to discard the character and shape imposed by others, always culminates in the triumph of the male. As a drake, the Ugly Duckling had a head-start.

When *heroines* undergo disguise — as kitchen-maids or beggars — it is not their identity but their acceptability which is at stake. Women exist in order to be recognised and chosen, like the right slipper for the right foot; or, on the other hand, to be punished. No humiliation is too harsh for the girl who rejects an honest suitor, or exercises any other form of choice.[1] The unfettered female is, by definition, destructive. Husbands are ruined, protectors perish, because of their dependents' insatiable demands, vanity, perfidy, greed, pride, or simply the uncontrollable urge to see, know, find out for themselves. Psyche and the wives of Bluebeard paid the penalty for ignoring the prohibition against looking; and, whenever divine retribution for human transgression reaches cosmic proportions, and evil is let loose upon the world, an Eve or a Pandora heads the cast.

The message is not lost upon little girls, driven home as it is by sticks and carrots in the lore of both remote unknown ancestors and successive celebrated imitators. Princesses are most admired in sleep — witness Snow White, Briar Rose and the soldier's bride in *The Tinderbox*. Mutes are next best: longing to reach her earthly lover, the Little Mermaid has her tongue cut out.[2]

Failing silence or a useful coma, approval may be won by gratitude, self-denial and sexual acquiescence towards frogs and monsters.[3] Together these make up the state of grace attained by shrews once tamed, and sinners brought low. Repenting of her red shoes, crippled Karen 'felt herself a thing forsaken by all mankind and accursed by the Angel of God'. Nature itself, in the person of talking animals — notably a cock subduing 30 wives — reminds men of their duty to chastise women into virtue.[4]

The developing genre of fiction-for-girls subtly acknowledged with propitiatory ploys the denial of its right to exist. Jean Webster's popular *Daddy-longlegs* letters (1912) were disarmingly addressed to a misogynist patron, and hostile censure is forestalled whenever some spirited impetuous open-air tomboy such as Heidi or Katy Carr or Jo March is rendered pensive and womanly and fit for marriage by accident or illness; a classic take-yourself-down-a-peg formula that continues to domesticate girls to this day.[5]

'The unfettered female is, by definition, destructive.' In Grimms' tale the fisherman's wife displays absurd greed and ambition, while the weak husband fails to fulfil his natural role of curbing her. Above: the wife sees herself as king.

IMPROVING books, evangelical tracts and cautionary tales have been for centuries the mouthpiece for patriarchal domination. The plots are so manipulative, the ulterior motive so blatant, the demands for compliance so menacing, that the welcome accorded to the stuff is quite astonishing. What do children see in it? *Pinocchio,* for instance, is an allegory of socialisation in which the puppet defies and rejects his martyred maker, painfully learns obedience, and thus becomes a Real Boy. In other words, you can have independence if you promise your parents never to use it.

A repressive moral is made entertaining by Schadenfreude. Carlo Collodi, author of *Pinocchio,* persuades young readers to identify with the erring protagonist as he is knocked into shape by promising them exemption from, and relish in, the worse fate meted out to scapegoats lower down the scale. Usually, those on the receiving end are women, but not always. The Scolar Press recently reprinted Grimms' tale[6] in which a simple servant, cheated by a miserly employer, wins a fortune by tricking a Jew. The victim resorts to law in the hope of redress, but eventually, amid cheers, goes to the gallows himself.

The intrinsic constraints and frustrations of their own position make children peculiarly susceptible to the promise of dominion over inferiors. The small and weak are naturally glad to hear that providence has ordained a sex that will always be weaker and races that will always be more infantile than themselves. The helpless crave omnipotence; those who must do as they're told long to give orders.

The task of growing up to be a man, breaking free of the leading strings of dependency, poses an existential dilemma for the adolescent boy, since he wants to have his father's privileges without incurring his father's displeasure, to usurp the throne without bringing down the monarchy, to maintain the law in general while breaking it himself. How to rebel loyally? Daniel Defoe provides an archetypal solution. Robinson Crusoe castigates his own youthful defiance in undertaking the voyage against his father's wishes, but he turns the island into a property of which any father would be proud, and becomes something more than a paterfamilias himself:

Crusoe instructs Friday in the Christian faith. Later Crusoe 'offers' him freedom, but Friday 'declares his absolute devotion'.

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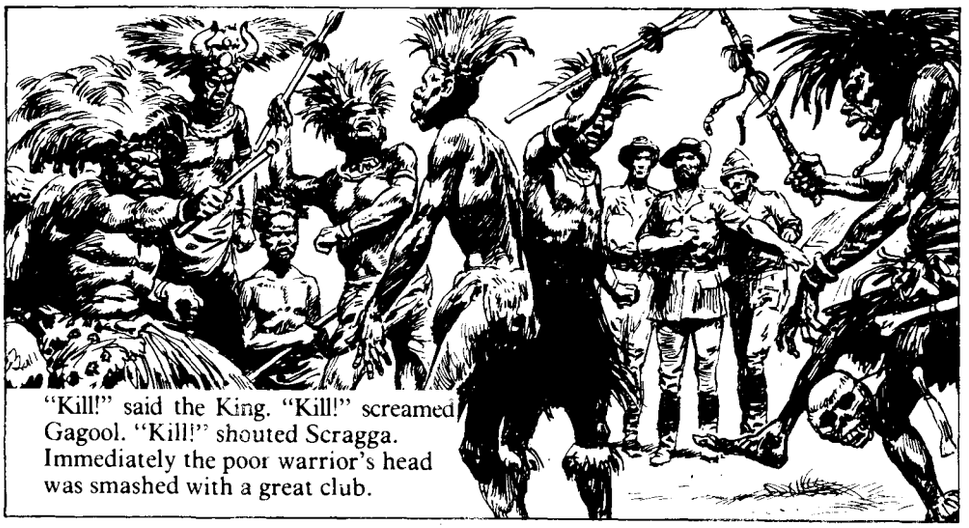
"Kill!" said the King. "Kill!" screamed Gagool. "Kill!" shouted Scragga. Immediately the poor warrior's head was smashed with a great club.

H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* adapted as a strip cartoon by Betty Root (Franklin Watts). Allan Quartermain and his white companions witness the barbarities of tribal Africa

'My people were perfectly subjected: I was absolute lord and law-giver. They all owed their lives to me and were ready to lay down their lives for me.' The filial devotion of the noble savage constitutes a plea to take over his desert island, thus achieving at a stroke liberty for the son, loot for the fatherland, and honour for both.

Defoe the speculator had a vested interest in encouraging emigration, and those who took up his theme made no secret of their imperial mission. Ideologues of Manifest Destiny, who boasted like Allan Quartermaine[7] that they felt more at home holding a rifle than a pen, they deliberately set out to man frontiers and swell the armed forces and colonial service with reader-recruits. Charles Kingsley concocted the Elizabethan romance *Westward Ho!* for distribution to British troops during the Crimean War. Walter Scott's rendering of British history lent chivalric glamour to mercantile depradations, and went down so well with 'soldiers, sailors and young people of bold and active disposition' that a Mediterranean cruise on a warship was arranged for him. Rudyard Kipling's efforts were similarly rewarded, and G. H. Henty, R. M. Ballantyne, Rider Haggard and Conan Doyle all travelled widely to further the global exploitation which they glorified in their books.

'IN CHILDHOOD,' observed Graham Greene, 'all books are books of divination. They tell of the future, and, like the fortune-teller, they influence the future.' The motifs of the adventure genre are deeply flattering to Europeans and remain embedded in our affections, even when they are ostensibly used only for comic effect. In a 'modern classic, by Astrid Lindgren[8], South Sea islanders prostrate themselves before white-skinned Pippi, with the same extravagant gestures as Man Friday: 'all the signs of subjection, servitude and submission imaginable'. These are Canny-Cannibals, predictably enough. The horrors of cannibalism were invariably cited to justify blowing natives to bits; explosions producing human debris are described by Defoe, Jules Verne and Joseph Conrad, and recur in nursery versions by Helen Bannerman, with mangled tigers substituted for anthropoid dismemberment.[9]

Apparently young blacks nowadays fail to see the joke. Well, it was never intended to amuse *them*. In the words of Uncle *(Brer Rabbit)* Remus, set down by Joel Chandler Harris, 'W'at a nigger gwineter l'arn outen books?'

Mordecai Richler reports the shock of realising that the Prize Day virtues exemplified by John Buchan's hero Richard Hannay, fair play, clean living, gentlemanly conduct, could never be his portion: 'I owe to Buchan the image of my grandfather as a little white-faced Jew with an eye like a rattlesnake.' Patriotism would be no fun if we let outsiders in. The cosy warmth of the rattling good yarn depends upon the denigration and exclusion of lesser breeds without the law — a catch-all category that expands as one examines it. The self-aggrandisement of Western culture apparently offers readers vicarious affiliation to a noble lineage, the proud security of acceptance in a famous gang; but many enthusiastic members have found themselves suddenly disqualified, mongrels cold-shouldered by thoroughbreds. Robert Robers's mates in the slums of Salford, affecting public school slang and imitating Bob Cherry's springy stride, eventually twigged that the likes of them were the execrated 'cads' who fell beyond the Greyfriars pale.[10] The predominance of snobbery-with-violence in the schools and libraries of industrial towns meant that, sooner or later, proletarian lads who loved stories would discover — as did girls of all classes — that their love was not reciprocated.

Such were the literary influences that 'made us what we are'. For that reason alone, they would be worth analysing. But the next generation is still being got at. Should we not dismantle our ideological scaffolding now that much of the imperial edifice it was designed to shore up has crumbled?

It has been estimated that our children will read on average not more than 200 books each before they grow up. In doing so, may they be spared any reinforcement of the delusions, arrogance and hatred that now threaten to cost us the earth.

---

[1]*The Fisherman's Wife* (folklore). [2]*The Little Mermaid* by Hans Christian Andersen. [3]*The Frog Prince; Beauty and the Beast; Father Frost; Old Peter's Russian Tales* (collected by Arthur Ransome). [4]*Red Shoes* (Andersen). [5]*Heidi* by Johanna Spyri; *What Katy Did* by Susan Coolidge; *Little Women* by Louisa M. Alcott. [6]*The Jew in the Bush.* [7]*King Solomon's Mines* by Rider Haggard. [8]*Pippi in the South Seas.* [9]*Little Black Sambo.* [10]*The Greyfriars series* was written by Frank Richards (Charles Hamilton).

What publishers and librarians say

'I wholeheartedly back the strong lobbying of such journals as the "Children's Book Bulletin . . ."'

In a children's book market which launches around 3,000 books each year, how much choice is there *really* and who controls the choice? As in other areas of the media, these are political questions. If, as I believe, the visual, moral and linguistic content of children's books is determined by various forces, then the racial, sexual and class content certainly is too. The problem needs to be discussed openly for as long as it takes to turn Britain into a country in which West Indian and Asian children no longer want to be white children rather than themselves (as shown in a recent survey), until a reviewer no longer needs to point out that a new book on nursing does not reflect general male nursing practice, and until non-standard English is no longer seen as a reflection of inferiority.

The choice is controlled by forces beyond the editor in the form of a series of censorships. Within the trade preconceptions that, for example, multi-ethnic books do not sell well may result in a restricted print run and therefore a higher price and fewer sales. Attitudes, often not overt or even very conscious, that children's books should be of a traditional kind can damn a title even before publication, as can the misapprehension that books which do not fit some known formula will not make money. The market therefore lacks the breadth of the adult market where innovators and iconoclasts can survive. Moreover, there are still not many writers equipped to broaden the base of the choice. Not many people are 'non-racist, non-sexist, non-classist' in their souls.

I wholeheartedly back the strong lobbying of such journals as the *Children's Book Bulletin, Dragons Teeth* and *Spare Rib,* and their associated groups, in the belief that attitudes will consequently be broadened, just as they were on the issues of female and gay liberation in the late Sixties and early Seventies. The result in a decade or two should be a relaxation of who's who, what sex and from where.

Josie Karavasil, Children's Book Editor, Evans Brothers

'Hapless librarians are attacked from all sides . . .'

Racism and sexism — and biased class values — are of concern to anyone who cares about our society and its children's well-being. There are so many points of view, and hapless librarians are attacked from all sides. If one buys *Biggles* one is accused of being racist. If one does not buy *Biggles* one is accused of censorship. *Little Women* is sexist; alternatively, it shows women coping capably without male support. Keats's *Whistle for Willy* is racist — Keats has ignored the realities of the black condition; alternatively, Keats has shown the universality of children's pleasures.

These pressures can be met only by assessing children's literature as *literature;* prejudices and pressure groups usually fade but living literature does endure. Correct social values, however well-meaning, do not necessarily ensure that a story is alive and enjoyed by children. Examples of 'worthy' picturebooks can be found in CISSY's list of non-sexist picturebooks — but so many of them — Brauna's *The King,* Wolde's *Emma and the Vacuum Cleaner* are *dull.*

Our society needs caring, feeling members — and feeling is the essence of literature. It must not be deadened, and turned into didacticism — no matter how worthy we deem any ensuing messages to be.

M. Mortimer, Youth Services Librarian, City of Edinburgh District Council — speaking in a private capacity.

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'When you see the delight of a group of Bengali children . . .'

As a librarian serving a multi-racial community I feel that my job is not prinicpally to ban books with racist or sexist attitudes, but more positively to look for books which are free from stereotyping. If there are many books where women play lesser roles, or feature only as housewives or helpless princesses, I must also buy plenty of books with positive adventurous female characters in them. Beside the stories of heroic British conquerors, I would like to have the stories of men and women who fought to free their countries from oppression. I feel I should make a positive effort to find books which portray the multi-racial society in which we live, or books which place value on the history and culture of other races. I hope none of my readers will find many books which contribute to lowering their self-esteem. I hope they will find many which place a positive value on their contribution to society. I want to encourage all children to read and enjoy books from Asia, Africa and the West Indies.

Finally, as a storyteller, I know that the most important thing is to tell a good story. If all the good stories have heroes and not heroines, then I change them round sometimes and let the princess rescue the prince. And it is well worth the effort of searching for a good story from Asia, when you see the delight of a group of Bengali children, for once listening to a folk tale from their own country, and sharing it with other children.

Ann Fairbairn, Children's Librarian, Luton Central Library

'The dissemination even of right and just values is, after all, no more than propaganda. There is surely more to literature than this.'

As descriptive terms, 'racist' and 'sexist' (and 'classist'?) are a useful shorthand, but are too often too freely applied, without explanation or elaboration, to dismiss a book. Very few published, contemporary authors of children's literature are thoughtlessly prejudiced — even fewer deliberately — nor, subject to the maintenance of the reality of their characters, do they present stereotypes or hostile or disparaging images of non-white people, foreigners, girls/women or of different classes. Unfortunately, some reviewers in their judgments do seem to employ only the criterion of whether a children's book has racist or sexist elements. This has certainly — and rightly — brought pressure to bear on authors (and editors) to become more conscious of such elements in their books. However, children's authors who value the integrity of their writing will not — and should not — be pressurised to falsify in order to present only what is considered to be morally acceptable or progressive. The dissemination even of right and just values is, after all, no more than propaganda. There is surely more to literature than this.

Di Denney, Children's Books Editor, Chatto & Windus

No more firemen

Contd from Page 16

cling to the EOC's tail. Yet this is now happening.

Let us put the matter in perspective. There is no disputing that our language is saturated by assumptions of male superiority and that children's books have traditionally affirmed the ascendancy of the male. No one doubts the value of critical pressures on writers, publishers and teachers to restore to girls a sense of their suppressed capacities, their ability to prosper in pastures jealously reserved by men. But a genuine 'cultural revolution' demands a process of cumulative conversion — and the extraordinary transformation undergone by children's books in recent years indicates that this is indeed taking place. What we don't need — never need — are 'voluntary' Guidelines disseminated by centralised bodies such as the EPC and the EOC, guidelines which no publisher (and therefore author) will risk violating for fear of commercial extinction. And it's worth noting that the Equal Opportunities Commission does not rule out a future extension of the Sex Discrimination Act to bolster such Guidelines with legal sanctions. Where will *Little Women* be then?

It's one thing to demonstrate that Jane Smith was victimised by her exclusion from a school carpentry class for which she displayed the necessary aptitude and enthusiasm. It would be quite another to insist that she was discriminated against because asked to read *Little Women* or, if she is black, *Robinson Crusoe*. Good books, particularly works of the imagination, owe a greater debt to social reality, past or present, than to an idealised, sanitised vision fostered by crusading reformers, some of whom are visibly engaged in personal empire-building.

To pin down discrimination in practice — 'women need not apply' — is one thing. But the EOC, although a statutory body with an obligation to use language as concisely as possible, now freely employs such terms as 'sexist' and 'stereotype', which are simply blunt instruments of warfare. Asked to define them, the EOC declined. Perhaps useful as consciousness-raisers, words like 'sexist' should be applied to literature only with the utmost caution — but never as a pretext for censorial pressure of the 'voluntary' Guidelines variety. To force a work of literary imagination through the sieve of an 'ism' is to do violence to the complex interplay between the overall narrative structure and the reader. What we don't need is a new generation of Young Pioneers spoon-fed in one-dimensional virtue.

Beyond the most obvious instances of conscious sexism ('woman's place is in the home') or racism ('the white man's mission to rule') stretches a vast terrain of ambiguity and contradiction stemming from our inadequate experience of gender relationships and identities in a non-repressive society (and we're not sure what that might mean, either). Would anyone care to define, for example, the dividing line between wanting to project oneself as sexually attractive but not wanting to be regarded as a 'sex object'?

Leaving aside the current working party so clearly dominated by the EOC's nominees, the EOC has already commissioned two reports intended to guide teachers, school librarians and publishers in the do's and don'ts of literary sexism. Far from presenting contrasting points of view, both reports are being written by Rosemary Stones, whose general indictments have provoked an indignant response from many children's authors who regard themselves as the opposite of 'sexist' (see Jill Paton Walsh's forthcoming article, NS 28 November). If accepted, the Stones reports will go out to the schools carrying the moral authority of the EOC's imprint, if not its imprimatur.

The Educational Publishers' Council would be well advised to abandon its present intention of joining with the EOC in issuing an Advisory Document to schools and publishers. Ever since Hollywood set up the Hayes Board there has been a beguiling temptation for media-related businesses to protect box-office receipts by self-censorship. For publishers, schools are very big box-office indeed. For the rest of us they are places where our children should be exposed to the widest possible variety of conflicting cultural influences.

Among this week's contributors:

MARION GLASTONBURY is a free-lance writer who contributes regularly to educational papers and journals.

DAVID CAUTE is the Literary Editor of the New Statesman.

ROSEMARY STONES is co-editor of the *Children's Book Bulletin* and co-author of a report on *Ethnic Minority Presentation in Trade Children's Books Published in Britain in the* 70s.

JOHN WILLETT has translated Brecht's *Galileo*. His most recent book was *The New Sobriety: Art and Politics in the Weimar Republic* (Thames & Hudson).

NEW CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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DENT

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Children: 8 —12

Rosemary Stones

Latency Period

American imports have long been fodder for pre-teen reading skills — with the adventures of 'titian-haired' girl detective Nancy Drew in her various *Mysteries of . . .* joining forces with Blyton's *Famous Five* to keep the pages turning over. But now the easy-read formula-series genre is moving on from the discovery of endless secret tunnels and the capture of yet more jewel thieves by intrepid youngsters to enclose the private world of the pre-pubescent, with its friends, foes and fears.

In American Judy Blume's *Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great* (Piccolo 80p), ten-year-old Sheila Tubman is frightened of dogs, of swimming, of noises in the night and of people knowing that she is frightened. A summer vacation with new friends and swimming lessons at the pool solve some of her problems. Meanwhile Margaret Simon, nearly 12, in Blume's *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* (Piccolo 85p) can't wait for her first period, especially as her friend Gretchen has already had hers. Margaret appeals regularly to her Maker to help out ('Oh please God. I just want to be normal') and all ends well with the onset of menstruation on the last page. Gripping stuff no doubt for those wrestling with — or curious about future — bodily changes, but delivered here with all the banality ('If you feel beautiful you are beautiful! It all comes from inside', 'I promise, you'll turn out normal') of a world where even distress and pain are slick and synthetic.

After the Blumeland menstrual problematic, it is a relief to find Ruth Thomson's invaluable *Have You Started Yet?* (Heinemann £3.50/ Piccolo 80p), an information book about periods for girls who are pre-pubescent or who are already menstruating. It's divided into sections which explain bodily changes, how to examine your own vulva, how to choose and use sanitary towels and tampons etc. The text explains clearly, the tone is straightforward and friendly and there are good line drawings and diagrams. And this is more than a handbook — quotes are used to illustrate the point that people have different attitudes to and experiences of menstruation and these reveal, unobtrusively, the tensions and inhibitions that still surround feelings about puberty. Boys will benefit too from reading this excellent book.

In the 1950s none of the books so far discussed would have been dreamed of. Young readers today can enjoy of course, not just the new trends in publishing for children but the republication of old favourites. Mary Norton's 'The Borrowers' books, first published in the Fifties and reissued this year as Puffins (*The Borrowers, The Borrowers Afield, The Borrowers Afloat, The Borrowers Aloft,* Puffin 75p each) are not to be missed. Unlike so many fantasies for children, these have a delightful logic: 'Factories go on making safety-pins and every day people go on buying safety-pins and yet, somehow, there is never a safety-pin when you want one. Where are they all?' They have, of course, along with a great many other things, been 'borrowed' by the little people who live under the floor, to be endlessly and ingeniously adapted to furnish their home. The precarious existence of these tiny people is carefully documented and the sober approach to detail injects their world with imaginative vitality and credibility. (Also available as a gift set in a box — Puffin £3.40.)

Nina Beachcroft's *The Wishing People* (Heinemann £3.95) covers similar imaginative territory when two wooden dolls in a Victorian weather house come to life and grant ten-year-old Martha and Jonathan ten wishes. The wishes begin to pall by about number six but the mingling of magic with the everyday life of a busy family is amusingly handled.

In *The Ordinary Princess* by M.M. Kaye (Kestrel £3.50) magic rules. In the kingdom of Phantasmorania, a seventh princess at her christening is granted that she should be 'ordinary'. After a few token tree climbs, this 'ordinary' princess marries, with saccharine predictability, a nice young man who turns out to be a prince. (And what a failure of sensibility that a fairy tale for the multi-ethnic audience of the Eighties should assure all our young readers that 'real princesses have . . . hair as yellow as the gold . . . eyes . . . as blue as the larkspurs . . . and complexions like wild rose petals and cream'.) *Clever Gretchen and Other Forgotten Folk Tales* retold by Alison Lurie (Heinemann £3.50) is, on the other hand, a genuine look at women's place. It's a stringent retelling of traditional tales with strong heroines, tales 'forgotten', Lurie opines in her introduction, by the (male) editors of folk tale collections in Victorian times. Some of the tales, like 'Molly Whuppie' who outwits the giant three times, have long been familiar, but 'Murzika' who slays a dragon and serves the sultan as a warrior and 'The Sleeping Prince' were certainly new to me.

Magic goes north in George Mackay Brown's *Six Lives of Fankle the Cat* (Chatto £4.95) which tells of the year (and of one of his nine lives) that Fankle spends in the Orkney Islands with 11-year-old Jenny, regaling her with tales of previous existences and insinuating himself into the lives of the Orkney villagers.

With John Rae's *The Third Twin* (Dent £4.50) magic and modern blend eerily as the dead buried at Westminster Abbey rise from their tombs to hold a protest meeting about a plan to open the Abbey all night (which will disturb their nocturnal ramblings). Twins Shamus and Jonny, pupils at Westminster School (where Rae is the real headmaster) are discovered hiding in the Abbey by the ghosts who hold one twin hostage while the other is sent to argue the ghostly case with the living. The story is spookily and pacily told in the old fashioned 'manly' style ('You must love your brother', he said, 'Love *him*!' I exclaimed. 'Not likely.')

Inner-city problems are the focus of *Nowhere to Play* by Buchi Emecheta (Allison & Busby £3.75) and *City Summer* by Rosalind Jackson and Pamela Johnson (A & C Black £2.95). Both books feature a multi-ethnic group of children who have a series of adventures. *Nowhere to Play* is thinly and overboisterously written with emphasis on action — the illustrations (by Peter Archer) reflect the text, with children hurtling over walls and down stairs. The result is barely credible, and this is a pity as Emecheta is a fine writer whose strength (as demonstrated in her novels for adults) is a gradual and sensitive build-up of character and situation, here quite lacking. *City Summer* is a

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collection of stories also written in a one-dimensional style, but freshly and enthusiastically and about a more credible series of events. The final story, 'Match of the Day', is certainly a tale of our egalitarian times — Georgia (of Jamaican origin), fed up with seeing the youth club girls hanging about while the boys play football, organises a girls' football team.

From Sweden, Hans-Eric Hellberg's *Ben's Lucky Hat* (Methuen £3.75) tells of the friendship between Ben and Sammy, two boys who live in the same inner-city tower block. But when Sammy is knocked over and killed Ben must overcome his loneliness and emptiness and begin to find himself again. A moving but not mawkishly told story, its urban backdrop economically sketched in.

And so to a historical novel, or rather to a novel of family history, for in *A Strong and Willing Girl* (Methuen £4.25) Dorothy Edwards has set down the stories she heard as a child of her aunt's girlhood in Victoria's reign when, aged ten, she started work as a domestic servant. There is a strong sense of place (Ham, Richmond) and, since Nan worked in temporary situations for modest households, there is a refreshing lack of 'upstairs, downstairs' cliché. The stories are robustly and amusingly set down. And, at a time when it is claimed that young readers will not read historical novels, I stick out my neck and thoroughly recommend this accessibly written, spirited account of a young servant's life.

Further reviews of children's books next week.

BOOKS IN GENERAL

John Bayley

Virile Saviours

Arctic Summer & Other Fiction by E. M. FORSTER *Arnold* £18.50

More than most successful writers E.M. Forster proceeded by fits and starts; success with him never produced a formula he could go on using. Two novels at least were aborted. The first, known as *Nottingham Lace* from its opening words, was Forster's first attempt, and petered out after 50 pages. The second, which he proposed to call *Arctic Summer*, exists in two major fragments, representing different attempts to come to grips with the plot. It was begun in 1911, a year after *Howards End* had made for him a reputation which he would have liked to exploit. Other bits and pieces, lovingly assembled and edited in this volume, are tales and short items which Forster either was unsatisfied with or else judged unfit for publication, together with a remarkable sexual fantasy written at the age of 83.

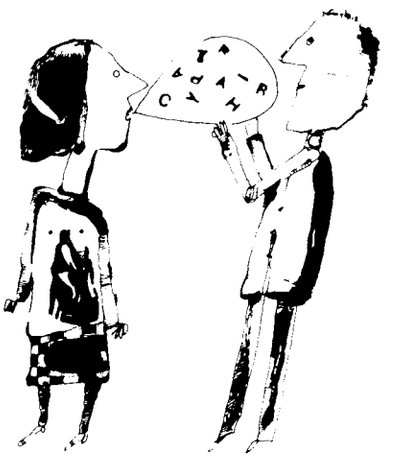
Arranged as they are, the fragments well illustrate the ambivalence of Forster's attitudes. On the one hand there is the self-generating rebellion against established authority — social, sexual, and clerical — with which he became identified and which related him to Samuel Butler, Wells, Shaw, and the early Lawrence. On the other hand there are different kinds of submission, less definitive but just as rigorous, to a heroic ethos — an ethos he found embodied in quiet, sunburned, inarticulate men, soldiers and policemen. Here the relation is not so much to Lawrence as to Kipling. By culture and temperament Forster was anti-authoritarian but his emotions and instincts were not: he is one of those authors who are apt to liberate you, and then put you in a different cell.

Of course he strove for a balance, very self-consciously so in *Howards End*, which would connect 'the prose and the passion'. Similar forces are in collision in *Arctic Summer*, but there the passion seems likely to win hands down. Perhaps that was why he couldn't get on with the novel, for his strength had always been in comedies of gentility and desire; and the ideals of *Arctic Summer* have all the mystic unreality of Kipling stories like *The Brushwood Boy*. The obligatory romps in the earlier novels are much more intensive. What comedy there is is often unintentional. When two brothers are riding together, the elder suddenly dismounts and flings himself down in the heather.

> 'Stiff?' the younger suggested; he was not always sure that Lance's actions were in good form.
> 'Oh no: I wanted to.'
> 'You'll get damp.'
> 'Thick bags.'

But wouldn't he have been wearing riding breeches? 'You'll get damp' seems more like the appeal of mother to mother's boy than of warrior to warrior's brother. But not the least engaging aspect of Forster's fiction is its instability and its underlying diffidence. He knew how little he knew about life and how much he dreamed about it.

P.N. Furbank's admirable biography told us a great deal. As the state of posthumousness turns Forster more into himself, his continuing influence seems more and more improbable, and yet it exists. Not only older generations of *New Statesman* readers but a comparatively new generation of novelists still conscientiously wear on their sleeves a developed heart. It is as much in vogue as the stiff upper lip once



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was. But Forster was not concerned with giving the right impression — he was at once too devious and too direct and he would be amused by the way in which 'serious' has become a cliché word in novel criticism. *Arctic Summer* shows him openly at war with socialist do-gooders and suffragettes. Or is he? Not for nothing was he known as the *taupe,* the mole. And he was the master of that particular sort of oblique disapproval which gave an invisible razor edge to every paragraph he wrote.

'Idea for a book on chivalry' appears in his diary for September 1911. Did this idea become absorbed into his recurrent day-dream of the virile man who would love him, protect him and release his sexuality? In a very early story, *Ralph and Tony,* the Forster figure Ralph meets Tony and his sister in the mountains. Tony despises and kicks him, and by these means they establish the standard kind of Forsterian intimacy, which here resolves itself into the odd plea: may I live with you and marry your sister? Sister, wholly submissive to the males, like all good girls in Forster, is anxious to oblige. In less simple form this kind of unreality attends the relationships in *The Longest Journey*; and in *Arctic Summer* it would probably have become odder than ever. Forster is seeking in vain a licensed correlative in fiction for his own obsession, and the solutions become more and more implausible. Only in *Maurice,* which he was writing privately, could he do the matter straight, and even there the virile saviour is lacking in reality. Forster cannot make his saviours English; the young Italian of his first novel is brilliant, and a pointer to the transformation and naturalisation of his obsessions in an Indian setting.

But the hero of *Arctic Summer* is appallingly English. Over against him in the pattern is the intelligent and human Martin Whitby, happily married to a sympathetic and only faintly bossy bluestocking. In trying to be 'fair' Forster has made things difficult for himself, but it is clear that when Whitby meets the hero March in Italy, all the false values of marriage, rationality, and progress are going to crumble. The hero is seeking a castle, Tramonta, where an ancestor of his is portrayed in a warlike fresco. I spotted an odd coincidence here, for the castle Forster intended is Malpaga near Bergamo, the home of Colleoni the *condottiere,* whose great equestrian statue stands in Venice, and is the occasion for the superb meditation on the necessities of power in Henry James's *Aspern Papers.*

Martin stands for the Arctic Summer, the long, cool, well-lighted season in which progress and humanity shall do their work; March for the chivalric ideal and the death it will bring. The pattern is strikingly apt for its period — a Sidney Webb versus a Rupert Brooke, as it were — but it would kill the life of any novel, especially a Forster novel. Balancing the claims of the virile warrior and the civilised moralist would have been too schematic a business. Venetia, Martin's wife, shows signs of being an emasculating influence, as all women not wholly submissive are in the Forster canon. Oddly enough Margaret, in *Howards End,* still more Adela Quested in *A Passage to India,* succeed by not really being women at all. They are Forster himself, involved with the virile Henry Wilcox and the charmingly fauve Aziz. Of course this is to oversimplify but it explains why those novels blossom as they do into real drama.

Nottingham Lace, begun at 20 and soon broken off, which seems a pity, is a remarkable exercise in the Jane Austen manner, with the usual themes already deploying themselves. It contrasts with 'Little Imber', a Yeatsian frolic by the elderly Forsterian persona, lust dancing attendance on old age. Two men in some weird future, one young and one old, who are employed to service a host of women, temporarily forgo their duties in order to have a little wrestle with one another, with the result that their semen drops together on what Forster calls 'the bestial floor'. An uncontrollable mystery does indeed result, for a human embryo takes form and dies only because it is neglected, the pair in the meanwhile having been busy with their heterosexual chores. The tale has a mad charm, and poetry too, not seeming either whimsical or allegorical but touchingly direct. It could only be by Forster, though apparently J.R. Ackerley was hovering in the background. It links up with a little exchange in *Arctic Summer,* between Martin's wife and mother-in-law.

> 'Nettie, you and I are a very lucky pair of petticoats . . . Whether Martin is equally lucky, I doubt. I wish he had a man to go about with.'
> 'What could a man do that we don't do?'
> 'He could be a man, my dear.'

It seems extraordinary that Lionel Trilling, to say nothing of others, should have for so long supposed that Forster's novels represented all the liberal values they cared about. But perhaps after all they were not so wrong. The novel, in the hands of a master, can move in a very mysterious way. Forster *knows:* his perceptions are unsleepingly vigilant, however much he is pussyfooting around, or playing to the gallery of his own instincts and desires. Kipling and Lawrence have the power, but he has a greater self-awareness, and in the curious form he provides it, it does shed a steady light over everything he sees and shows us. The unreality, the duplicity which he came to resent so much having to practise, are themselves in fact a very essential part of it. Had he been a homosexual today he might have been happier, but it is very unlikely that he would have written as well or as illuminatingly as he did.

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Andrew Motion

Glow & Haze

Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-1978 by SEAMUS HEANEY *Faber* £7.95
Selected Poems 1965-1975 by SEAMUS HEANEY *Faber* £3.95 & £1.95

Seamus Heaney opens his collection of prose pieces with a reminiscence of childhood, 'Mossbawn': 'I would begin with the Greek word, *omphalos*, meaning the navel, and hence the stone that marked the centre of the world, and repeat it, *omphalos, omphalos, omphalos,* until its blunt and falling music becomes the music of somebody pumping water at the pump outside our back door. It is Co. Derry in the early 1940s.' This transition from experience — here the wisdom of experience — to innocence describes a typical movement of Heaney's imagination. Later in the same essay he recalls his young self climbing into a hollow tree, but once again the scene becomes available only in educated, mythologised terms: 'In that tight cleft, you sensed the embrace of light and branches, you were a little Atlas shouldering it all, a little Cerunnos pivoting a world of Antlers.' And in his poetry, too, the speaker repeatedly looks back to infancy in such a way as to register affection and distance at the same time. 'Digging' is a good example: the poet who vows to 'dig' with a pen rather than inherit his father's spade is simultaneously adopting a habit of intent labour and indicating his isolation from a familiar way of life. The past, for Heaney as for Wordsworth, is a source of comfort as well as frustration; it can never be recovered whole.

Variations on this conflict are played throughout *Preoccupations* — sometimes explicitly, but more often by implication. The essays — whether autobiographical or critical — are rapt rhetorical broodings, litanies, almost, in which the same touchstones crop up again and again, and the same names are repeated like refrains: Wordsworth, Hopkins, Yeats, Kavanagh. When Heaney abandons this method, his remarks look rather thinly summarising (in 'Englands of the Mind', for instance), and when he over-indulges it, he produces a neo-Hopkinsian excess — 'Muldoon's rivery and apple-dappled Armagh'. But at his frequent best he marvellously recreates his experience of writing, reading and — as the extracts from 'Mossbawn' above illustrate — living.

In a sense, his characteristic prose style enacts this tension between experience and innocence. On one hand he needs to retain and develop a worldly critical watchfulness, and on the other he has to remain faithful to the obscure sources from which he insists his poetry springs. He has always, he says, been fascinated by the 'underground side of things', and his poems persistently illustrate his 'idea of poetry as a point of entry into the buried life of the feelings or as a point of exit'. 'Bogland' is an obvious instance:

> Our pioneers keep striking
> Inwards and downwards,
>
> Every layer they strip
> Seems camped on before.
> The bogholes might be Atlantic seepage.
> The wet centre is bottomless.

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Experienced critic and instinctual poet negotiate with each other throughout *Preoccupations*. Or to put it in Heaney's own words, the book conducts an extended debate between 'craft', which he defines as 'the skill of making', and 'technique', which he says 'involves the discovery of ways to go out of . . . normal cognitive bounds and raid the inarticulate'.

In almost every essay Heaney discusses this dialectic between 'intellectual baggage' and 'instinctual ballast'. And over the years he has enormously increased the range of his own 'technical' resources. The character of his first two collections derives in large part from their craftsmanship — for all their subtle sensuality, they tend to treat straightforwardly a clearly-perceived set of subjects. But since *Wintering Out* he has been more readily prepared to admit what cannot easily be articulated. In many respects, the change recalls the distinction that Conrad makes in *Heart of Darkness* between tales in which the 'whole meaning' lies within 'the shell of a cracked nut', and others in which the meanings are 'not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which [brings] it out only as a glow brings out a haze'. This isn't to imply imprecision in Heaney's recent poems, but to admit their element of mystery. Significantly, one of the things he admires in Yeats is the narrowing of 'the gap which etymology has forced between mystery and mastery'.

This enlarging of imaginative resonance and association — what Wordsworth calls 'wise passiveness' — has a complex political dimension. Just as experience and remembered innocence strove to achieve their mature relationship, so he has had to maintain 'a notion of [himself] as Irish in a province that insists it is British'. The first 'literary language' he encountered was 'the classic canon of English poetry', but its resented dominance was quickly challenged as he investigated his own native culture. The result was not usurpation but interinanimation (Heaney approvingly uses Donne's word himself). 'If you like', he says, 'I began as a poet when my roots were crossed on my reading. I think of the personal and Irish pieties as vowels, and the literary awarenesses nourished on English as consonants.' The poem 'Anorish' confirms this:

> *Anahorish*, soft gradient
> of consonant, vowel-meadow
> after-image of lamps
> swung through the yards
> on winter evenings.

Since the Troubles began, this process has taken a new turn. As well as continuing to construct 'the satisfactory verbal icon', he has undertaken a search for 'images and symbols adequate to [his] predicament'. The 'Bog Poems' are one outstanding result — and their reconciliations of Irish and English locutions, and past and present histories, allow him to maintain a profound commitment without becoming narrowly partisan. *Preoccupations* is prefaced by a quotation from Yeats's *Explorations*: 'If I had written to convince others I would have asked myself, not "Is that exactly what I think and feel?" but "How would that strike so-and-so? How will they think and feel when they have read it?" And all would be oratorical and insincere.'

It's one of Heaney's special strengths that he never ignores this reasoned advice. It's another that he never follows a rational procedure without exploring whatever 'instinctive, instantaneous recognition' might lie behind it.

Empty Rhetoric

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS assesses the PLP's new leader in the light of his latest book

Debts of Honour by MICHAEL FOOT *Davis Poynter* £9.50

In the following passages, who is being assessed by whom?

> It is the superlative ease, the unruffled assurance with which that mind works, which first impresses those who meet him. One can hardly hear the mechanism working at all and yet the results have a perfect precision. Without any sense of strain or pretention, that marvellous instrument absorbs all the arguments presented to it and sifts from them an endless flow of conclusions framed in smooth, yet vibrant English

Or, in a comparable vein,

> What [he] so valiantly stood for could have saved his country from the Hungry Thirties and the Second World War . . . genius.

The first paragraph is an appreciation of Lord Goodman. The second is a paean to Sir Oswald Mosley. The author in both cases is Michael Foot.

He there exhibits (as he does at much greater length in *Debts of Honour*) the three distinctive traits of his character as author and as politician. These are a deep reverence for the Establishment, especially for its more gamey ornaments, a fascination with certain reactionary rebels, and a prose style which relies on hyperbole for such effect as it can command.

There is a fourth ingredient, only hinted at in the above. It is a pervasive and amusing variety of chauvinist Anglophilia; very highly developed and of an intensity usually found only among Americans.

This ought to make for an enjoyable if not a very enlightening read. But it doesn't. The treacly exaggerations start to cloy after a while; it's like eating a whole box of chocolate creams. Swift is 'the foremost exponent of lucidity in the English language'. Max Aitken 'was as handsome as Apollo, as swiftly-moving as Mercury'. Isaac Foot 'must have been just about the happiest man who ever lived'. Randolph Churchill 'set the Thames, the Hudson, the Tiber or the Danube on fire with his boiling intoxicant invective'. There is no subtlety, no light or shade. Everybody has to be larger than life.

Foot was apprenticed to flattery at the court of Beaverbrook, and learned his trade well. The longest essay in this collection of profiles and memoirs concerns the old monster himself. He would not be able to claim that Foot did not take him at his own valuation. Apparently Beaverbrook favoured the 'rumbustious, marauding private enterprise system which had enabled him to become a multi- or as he would call it, a Maxi-millionaire'. And which enabled him to keep Foot (and to a more parsimonious extent, *Tribune*) in fair old style. Luckily, Beaverbrook was quite nice if you really knew him, as well as being 'a volcano of laughter which went on erupting till the end'.

This rebarbative style is more of a wade when it is used to praise a good man than when it is employed to whitewash a villain. Ignazio Silone was a very great writer and a very fine comrade. But he was not 'the New Machiavelli' and didn't pretend to be. Bertrand Russell was and remains an inspiration in philosophy and politics. But who really regards him as a 'Philosopher Englishman'? And how many takers for the following estimate?

> He became one of the chief glories of our nation and people, and I defy anyone who loves the English language and the English heritage to think of him without a glow of patriotism.

What the hell, one is moved to inquire, has *that* got to do with it? It might be truer to say that Russell would resent very much any attempt to annex him and his thought in such a way. A man who gave so much of himself to other countries, and who was so opposed to the crappy orthodoxies of British arrogance, cannot be captured in lines and thoughts like Foot's.

Not that Foot's admiration for Russell is feigned. I should say that most of his essay on Tom Paine was inspired by a piece Russell wrote in 1934 — except that Foot inserts a factual error about Jefferson that Russell did not make.

This tendency to hero-worship results in some very bizarre formulations. Say what you

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like about Disraeli ('The Good Tory'), it is difficult to recognise anything 'Byronic' in his career or in his novels. Yet that is the precise epithet which Foot selects for him. There is a great deal yet to be learned about Robert Blatchford, but it will not be found out by calling him 'just about the best writer of books about books there ever was'. For one thing, such praise is meaningless. For another thing, it elides the obvious about Blatchford — his miserable declension from an affected socialism to an unaffected racialism and insularity. Perhaps Foot finds the reminiscence an uncomfortable one.

The obverse of Foot's credulity about people and institutions (who now remembers his slavishly adoring biography of Harold Wilson?) is an attractive streak of sentiment. He manages to enlist a kind of sympathy when he writes about H.N. Brailsford or about Vicky. Even though the Brailsford essay is clotted with overwriting ('glorious', 'imperishable' etc, etc) one can see that Foot does not *need* to strain for effect on this occasion. The subject matter tells its own story.

But all the rest is rambling and bluff. Apparently, Sarah Churchill, 'given her magnificent head', could have salvaged England in the reign of Queen Anne. Apparently 'the magnanimous English Left, led as usual by the Irish', came to the rescue of Jonathan Swift. These re-workings have at least the merit of improbability (especially in the latter case, coming as it does from the Orangeman's best friend; the man who dealt them a new hand to buy Callaghan an extra month).

I don't think that Foot can ever have blotted out a line. The collection is much harder to read than it must have been to write. Did he, for instance, really mean to say the following about his poor wife?

> The room of her own, the room where she works, when she is not cooking, gardening, shopping, cleaning, making beds, entertaining and the rest, is a feminist temple, a shrine dedicated to the cause of women's rights.

If this is one of Foot's arch bits of self-mockery, I think we should be told. When a man can write about Beaverbrook that: 'I loved him, not merely as a friend but as a second father. . .' One needs a stone of some kind to separate parody from the real thing.

The point about hero-worship is not that you may be worshipping the wrong hero. It is that you surrender your reason and suspend your critical faculties. Foot's book on Aneurin Bevan, though written with much greater care than the present collection, is a disappointment because it makes its subject into a devotional figure, and thus greatly exaggerates his real importance in our time. Issues like Churchill's conduct of the war, Tito's treatment of political opposition, or the Russian invasion of Hungary are shaped in a Procrustean fashion to fit Bevan's own role. The book cannot be read (unlike, say, Isaac Deutscher's biography of Trotsky) as a guide to the period in which the central figure operated.

Still less do any of these portraits fulfil that necessary function. Once you start calling Beaverbrook a 'buccaneer', it is only a short while before you find you have written this:

> The military vision of Churchill and his chief advisers was still fixed on other and lesser objectives and it was Beaverbrook who, within the Cabinet, within the Government machine, seized and sustained the initiative to turn the national energies along the road of commonsense.

Eh? Does Foot read his articles through when he's finished?

Foot is never happier than when writing about the second world war. It is a favourite theme in his contemporary speeches as well. He seems to remember a period of social harmony, democratic impulse and social innovation. His famous polemic *Guilty Men* (which he penned under the *nom de guerre* of Cato) has an account of Dunkirk which could have come from the *Boys Own Paper*. Such an attitude, which might have made agitational sense in wartime, has more than outlived its usefulness. I remember hearing Foot invoke the spirit of Dunkirk in the Commons on the night Labour lost the vote of confidence in 1979; it was ghastly to hear the titters of the Tories and to see the embarrassment on the Labour benches.

In 1940, also, it might have been permissible for a socialist to write as if Britain did not have an Empire (though Orwell, for one, kept insisting that the subject be remembered). Foot contrives to daub his portrait of Beaverbrook as if the man had never been an imperialist at all. He does have the grace to recall 'Max' at the time of Munich, but only to mention it as an aberration. For the rest, this beautiful friendship, and its seminal role in Our Island Story, is preserved and mummified for ever in scented prose. It seems almost unkind to disturb it now.

Because Foot is a charming old ham in one way, and one should not be surprised at his liking for fellow hams. He has given plenty of harmless pleasure to hopeful audiences in his time. Some say that his present attachment to the most flagrant conservatism is the result of a 'mellowing' process. Others talk darkly of a 'sell-out'. But, as far as can be discerned, Foot is quite right to claim consistency in his own record.

He has never been otherwise than a *poseur*; moving smoothly, for instance, from CND into Callaghan's inner cabinet on the Cruise missiles and back into irrelevant pacifist attitudes this week. Like Disraeli, he is a quick-change artist. The objection comes when he dresses up this act as socialism, and thus disfigures a good idea. (Just as he here proposes Disraeli as a radical — because he once gave a civil audience to that old fraud and chauvinist H. M. Hyndman.)

In his brief essay on Vicky, Foot asks the reader, 'And, if he had lived, which of us would have escaped the lash?' Good question. I believe that there does exist a link between Foot's gullibility as a person, his credulity as a profile-writer, and his disqualifications as a politician. The same weakness of character that makes him fawn in print makes him a conformist in politics. The same glutinous style (he even writes of the acid Defoe that 'the truth he had bottled up within himself for so long poured out in golden spate') has its analogue in the gross sentimentality which marks his public speaking.

A good test is this. Listen to a Foot speech, whether made on a party conference platform or in the House of Commons. Mark the dewy response it sometimes gets. Then grab a copy of Hansard or the conference report and *read* the thing. Full of evasions, crammed with corny special pleading, usually rounded off with an appeal for unity and generally couched, behind its rhetorical mask, in terms of extreme political orthodoxy. A locus classicus here is his defence of Mrs Gandhi's merciless Emergency, where a crude and reactionary political manoeuvre was defended by Foot as an inheritance from the splendid days of Congress, and as a necessary insurance against 'destabilisation'.

Another relationship exists in the matter of detail. Whether he is writing about Tom Paine, or justifying the last Labour government's breaking of the firemen's strike, Foot likes to deal in sweeping generalities. He once echoed Lamb's toast to Hazlitt, 'Confusion to Mathematics', by proposing the toast 'Confusion to Economics'. How predictable, then, that he would become the stoutest defender of the most dismally conventional economic policy when he got anywhere near power. And how regrettable, when discussing Tom Paine, that he should say, with habitual absolutism, that Jefferson 'never wavered' in his high opinion of Paine. It is important, in any evaluation of Paine's American years, to recall the coldness which did interrupt his relationship with Jefferson.

These details matter. In this country it is pretty easy to get a reputation as a radical. The standard of our politicians is such that, when they prove literate at all, they are hailed as Romantics, Renaissance men, Revivalists. The timing of this book could not have been more fortunate; we shall be able to examine both vainglorious claims at once.

The best interim obituary may be that written about Foot's hero Disraeli by Lady Gwendolen Cecil:

> He was always making use of convictions that he did not share, pursuing objects which he could not own, manoeuvring his party into alliances which though unobjectionable from his own standpoint were discreditable and indefensible from theirs. It was an atmosphere of pervading falseness which involved his party as well as himself . . .

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Benedict Nightingale

Party Piece

Illuminations by PETER JENKINS *Lyric, Hammersmith*
My Dinner with André by WALLACE SHAWN and ANDRÉ GREGORY *Theatre Upstairs*
Mean Streaks by ALAN WILLIAMS *Bush*

The two 385-year-old sagas I enjoyed at Stratford last week will have to wait a little for review, since the theatre is rarely so up-to-the-moment as to produce a play about a battle for the leadership of the Labour Party at the very time that selfsame battle is actually settled. Peter Jenkins's powers of prophecy are clearly formidable, but not, of course, quite magical. In his undated Britain it's a Labour, *not* a Tory, government that is presiding over accelerating economic disaster; and those with hopes of succeeding the ageing PM are the social-democrat home secretary, whose fastidious manner and gourmet tastes belong more to Roy Jenkins than Denis Healey, and the employment secretary, a tough-guy Tribunite with a twisted, sideways grin and very little of Michael Foot about him. Which will emerge from the year's cavortings at Blackpool with the more credit and power?

For most of the evening, I felt that Peter Jenkins's heart ticked for and with the 'moderates', so elegantly represented by Paul Eddington's home sec. His enemy is pushing through a motion about educational egalitarianism designed to embarrass him, since his son is a public schoolboy, and doesn't exactly discourage rampaging Trots from disrupting the Fabian tea-party at which he proposes to defend himself.

It is Mr Eddington who gets the most lines, the better jokes, and, as the urbanely distraught victim of far-left machiavellianism, no doubt the sympathy of the mainly middle-class audience as well. But by the end Mr Jenkins is putting more and more distance between himself and his protagonist's snobbishness, cynicism and champagne socialism — though not, it should be emphasised, with any intention of endorsing Trevor Martin's employment sec, who is devious, callous, and several of the other things closet Stalinists are supposed to be. The play's view seems rather to be that both men are bad for party and country: hence the fanciful and sensational ending, at which all the combatants line up and sing the Red Flag to the sound of riot and explosion offstage. Labour wrangles; Britain burns.

It is a highly diverting piece, packed with the detail one would expect from a political journalist who must in his time have noshed cartloads of prawn cocktails in that stately pleasure-dome, the Imperial Hotel; but then come the inevitable qualifications. First, Mr Jenkins's scepticism about the future of the people's party is based on outrageously selective evidence, and specifically on a suspicion of the Left that edges into paranoia. Second, his principals lack the size and depth a powerful, challenging play would require. Compare his protagonist with Granville Barker's in *Waste,* destroyed by scandal when he attempts to give a disestablished Church's wealth to the nation's schools, and you'll quickly see how relatively puny he is, how slim his commitment to anything positive, how cursory the conflict inside him between the public and private, how slight his anguish. Third, he's surrounded by characters so stock that one of them, a blunt northerner who stomps onstage with a bellow of 'there's trouble down at t'Winter Garden', is actually played by Nigel Stock. On top of his political punditry, Mr Jenkins is an able theatre critic; but, if he wants to add the title of serious dramatist to his curriculum vitae, he must make sure all those 'well-made plays' don't blight his sensibilities.

My Dinner is a new species of play, though not an invention one would care to see fall into the wrong hands. Imagine listening to a two-hour replica of John Osborne's conversation with John Braine over brown windsor soup in some Surrey steak-house. But the scripted summary of an encounter between Wallace Shawn, a squat playwright and sometime actor, and André Gregory, a spindly, ascetic theatre director, proves it to have been a more profitable occasion.

We begin with Gregory's account of his own feverish searchings, which took him to Tibet, a vegetable-worshipping Scots commune, and the Sahara, where he ate sand with a Japanese monk; and we proceed, via discussion of consumerism, New York, the theatre and much else, to a debate about the purpose and prospects of the race itself. Each participant presses his case eloquently, wryly sends up his own limitations and excesses, and sometimes both at once.

The faults are not, as one feared, intellectual pretension and moral pomposity. The worst that can be said is that the treatment of some subjects, such as the sufficiency of science, is flimsy and amateurish, and that no one adequately recognises that grand spiritual odysseys can be undertaken only by the monied and (perhaps) spoiled.

And yet, paradoxically, I found myself mainly in sympathy with Gregory. His chronic restlessness may sometimes have led him up lunatic byways; but it seemed a more positive response to a deadly society than Shawn's genial materialism, his earthy delight in the New York Streets, in his bustling lifestyle, in his shambling apartment, and (not least) in an early-morning cup of coffee into which a cockroach has not fallen. Perhaps it's too much to claim that the play becomes nothing less than a tussle between romance and realism, imagination and sense, spirit and body: too many ideas are left unexplored. Better to see it as an enjoyably-elaborated argument between an articulate Don Quixote and a humorous Sancho Panzo, and, perhaps, a demonstration that both are necessary to the rest of us.

Louis Malle directed, and apparently plans to film the play: a tricky enterprise, since a table, two chairs and some Perrier water are more decor than it strictly requires. On the other hand, *Mean Streaks* has a kitchen sink in the chalet where it's set and the town of Morecambe sprawling outside, and could easily become one of those black-and-white semi-documentaries popular in the late Fifties. It's presented by Hull Truck, which specialises in funny-glum 'slices of life', though this example of the genre is more conventionally scripted by one of the company's house-actors; it involves emotional isolation, economic anxiety, and the general lack of fulfilment that vacations-by-the-sea are peculiarly suited to accentuate; and it is extraordinarily well played, especially by Chris Jury, the very archetype of spotty, insecure, self-pitying, corncrake-voiced adolescence.

Television

Julian Barnes

Art Attack

Eight programmes and several different producers failed to cure Robert Hughes of his attack of penguin arms, his camera-conscious, muscle-bound walk, or his belligerent style of address: a manner suggesting that, if he didn't get Yes for an answer, he might leap through the screen and have you submitting to a single-leg Boston before you could croak Mark Rothko. Still, by the end of *The Shock of the New* (BBC-2), it wasn't just the demeanour of the highly visible Mr Hughes which proved unsettling: the series as a whole left one feeling warily grateful but strangely uneasy.

Did you answer Yes to Mr Hughes? The BBC's big 'Son of *Civilisation*' promo-job, plus the Reith-lecture treatment of each script in the *Listener,* encouraged one to babble that Yes, to agree what a jolly good thing it was *per se* to have eight hours of art history on the box, and move on to the next subject. But if we are saying Yes to Hughes, we'd better first decide on the question — something it took the full eight hours to unravel.

Hughes certainly brought zest and knowledge to his subject; he began by announcing with cleansing confidence that the Modern Movement had produced both works of genius and vast amounts of junk; and he regularly came out with bracing generalisations — 'Around 1870 the world of paintable pleasure dramatically widened'; 'Unlike our grandparents we live in a world that we made' — which seemed to imply a probing mind. But the problem that declared itself more and more pressingly as the series developed was simply this: where does Hughes stand? In manner, in phrasing, he looks every inch a critic with trenchant, iconoclastic, no-shit opinions. But do you remember any of them? Does his account of any particular art movement of the century stand out?

Only one, I'd guess — his swingeing, Bookerish attack on modern architecture, which, though spattered with the occasional error (like getting the number of storeys in Corbusier's most famous building out by 50 per cent), was lively and consistent for all that.

Yet when it came to art? 'We now take it for granted,' Hughes announced while discussing Rauschenberg, 'that art can be anything.' Well,

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up to a point we do; what 'we' don't yet take for granted — indeed get quite shirty about — is the idea that all art, once generically classified as such, is equally good. Hughes, to give him his due, was lukewarm about the André bricks, and called Las Vegas 'lousy art, but art all the same'; yet he never appeared to believe (or think it part of his critical duty to suggest) that one artist might be substantially more interesting, important or affecting than any other. Many of the artists he discussed in his final programmes — like Segal or Riley — are content to do one small, narrow, usually pleasant and effective thing. Hughes treated them as respectfully as he did the giants of early modernism who roared through styles and roughed up genres.

The Shock of the New all too often became a television equivalent of New York's Museum of Modern Art — affectionately mocked by Hughes precisely because it represented everything and judged nothing.

One isn't asking for Hughes to come out with Peter Simple accusations of bogosity when faced with some of his more tendentious and self-celebrating subjects (prime among these was Robert Motherwell, who talked about himself with hushed awe, as if he were a great artist who had just slipped out of the room for a moment, and who appeared to believe he was the first person to think the colour black symbolic of death). But one wouldn't mind putting to Hughes far more often than he put it to himself the question 'What do *you* think of it?' Summaries of artists' intentions stood in all too frequently for critical response.

Thus, the final programme contained two items of American 'field art': one, a set of 400 tall, steel-tipped spikes set into a square mile or so of inaccessible New Mexico; the other, a sort of concrete bunker with possible Mayan influence built in the Nevada desert. Both these sites, Hughes informed us, provide 'non-museum' experiences; the bunker artist in interview explained his pleasure at producing both a work of art and a slice of land neither of which had any value (slap in the face for art-grabbing, land-cherishing society); and Hughes concluded that 'one of the last acts of modernism was, as it were, to return to the desert'. Descriptively accurate, critically null. Were the bunker and the spikes as monotonous an experience as they seemed to be from our swooping helicopter shots of them? Were the artists' intentions fulfilled? Did their intentions bear scrutiny in the first place? Could it all have been done a lot better? These two works clarified the complaint which had been grumbling away in my head for much of the series. Hughes at one point justly rebuked the art world for its 'meaningless tolerance'; it was hard not to feel that *The Shock of the New,* in a more intellectually respectable way, was indulging in exactly the same brand of meaningless tolerance.

There was nobody like Mr Hughes on the Indian Pacific, when *Great Railway Journeys of the World* (BBC-2) reached his native Australia; there was only Michael Frayn plus a group of old-age pensioners. They weren't, to put it mildly, the liveliest bunch of oldsters ever to hit a TV screen: they were about as dull and scraggy as the famous Nullarbor plain ('no trees', Frayn etymologised it for us). Among some resplendent photography of slow-moving locomotives, and some beguiling bits of Oz railway lore, there were puzzlingly frequent, not to say obsessive, shots of Mr Frayn's naked chest. A chest, for those of you who missed it, of the Multarbor genus.

Art

John Spurling

The Importance of Being Anarchist

Artists, Writers, Politics: Camille Pissarro and His Friends *Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*
Camille Pissarro *Hayward*

'I definitely believe that our ideas, impregnated as they are with anarchist philosophy, colour our works and make them obnoxious to present-day taste.' Pissarro's sympathy with the anarchists of the late 19th century is well known and well documented in a useful archival exhibition at the Ashmolean, Oxford. When, for a short period in the 1880s, Pissarro joined Seurat and his followers in the exploration of Divisionism and thereby offended his former pupil Gauguin who was by then into Symbolism, he did so because he shared the Divisionists' political ideas as much as their artistic ones. Yet it would be almost possible for anyone ignorant of Pissarro's politics to go round the 200 or so paintings, drawings and prints assembled at the Hayward and emerge still ignorant. Almost, but not quite possible, since the album of drawings called *Turpitudes Sociales,* dating from 1890, the year before the letter to his son Lucien quoted above, constitutes an overt attack on 'the shameful ignominies of the bourgeoisie', capitalism and the urban misery caused by it.

It is an uncharacteristic work. Pissarro was that very rare thing, a political artist who preferred to celebrate what he saw as good than to excoriate the wicked. Even the word 'celebrate' is a little too strong. Of all the great Impressionists he was the least showy, the least temperamentally given to letting the impression run away with the motif. Indeed the term coined primarily to label Monet's atmospherics is especially inappropriate to Pissarro. He and Monet were close friends — they lived quite near one another and in 1892 the much more successful Monet lent Pissarro money to buy his house at Eragny — and around the time of the first Impressionist exhibition Pissarro began using brighter colours and lighter brushstrokes under the influence of Monet; but Pissarro's real interest, which he shared and explored in company with Cézanne during the 1870s, was in the depth and solidity of landscape.

The fact that he was the only artist to take part in all eight Impressionist exhibitions has tended to obscure his older roots in the tradition evolved by Corot, Courbet and Daubigny. Pissarro was not just an Impressionist and Divisionist; his work had also been included with that of Manet and Whistler in the Salon des Refusés of 1863 and, more significant still, in the dreaded Salon itself in 1859, and on six further occasions up to 1870.

Pissarro was a pacific anarchist. As he grew older he took a dimmer and dimmer view of the social order, but his remedy was not to throw bombs at it or even, except in *Turpitudes Sociales,* anti-propaganda. Being an anarchist he had no belief in a rival system, so he opposed capitalist society not with its mirror image but its true opposite, the value of individual experience. If that sounds like escapism, it is because we have been indoctrinated by people with a rival social system to sell, and if Pissarro's equation of the value of individual experience with a modest northern landscape and a distinctly dignified peasantry seems now too Arcadian and archaic, that is because a hundred years of rapid change have inevitably unbalanced the equation. In his own day one can see him making the necessary small adjustments, first for the trains and factories which were creeping into the countryside, later for the peasants coming to town to sell their produce and, in the last years of the century and his own life, for the growing importance of the cities, represented in his world by Rouen and Paris. It is hard for us, inured to high mobility, instant intercommunication, ceaseless destruction and construction, exaggeration of every kind, to pay serious attention to Pissarro's quiet and narrow stage. It is easier, since we don't expect them to have much in common with ours, to take seriously the worlds depicted by 17th- and 18th-century painters. But here are a few small corners of what is still recognisable as our world —places we could drive out to have a walk in — and a man who asks us without a trace of frivolity to take them as his gospel, his considered riposte to 'the shameful ignominies of the bourgeoisie'.

It is not even as if he glorified the peasants. We would understand that and have our responses ready, as we do for Millet's peasants. In the 1880s Pissarro graduated from landscapes with small figures on the roads or in the fields to figure-paintings with a landscape background. He certainly went to Millet for these figures, for their roundness, their poses, their placing and sometimes their activities, but the difference from Millet is equally striking. Pissarro does not, as Millet does, make icons of his peasants. 'It is I who am Jewish,' he wrote, 'But he [Millet] who is Biblical.' When Gauguin in his turn borrowed the figures from Pissarro they became, shorn of their element of social comment, still more religious than Millet's.

The meaning Pissarro finds in them, however, is purely secular. They go about their work or lie down to rest unselfconsciously in their own places, neither particularly bent with toil nor particularly beautiful with moral superiority. They are no more and no less than the human dimension, writ larger, of the earlier landscapes.

Pissarro's home territory and the landscape he mainly painted, except when he went to stay with his friend Piette in Brittany, was not all that rural. It was the bit between the rivers Oise, Epte and Seine, just north-west of Paris, a favourite stamping-ground of the Impressionists because it was easily accessible from Paris. Monet tended to paint the rivers and the trees reflected in them, but Pissarro concentrated on the fields, houses, small hills, and roads. His earliest landscapes, those exhibited at the Salon in the 1860s, are heavily modelled in dark earth tones, but bathed in a Corot-like clarity so that the greens and browns glisten. In all of them the eye is led, down a road or by way of figures and trees, into some kind of middle-distance

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pocket, a place well below the horizon, usually a group of very chunky houses banked with hills.

In his Impressionist landscapes of the 1870s the pocket-effect is at first less noticeable, but the extreme atmospheric clarity remains, as does the wonderful contrivance of depth and space. What distinguishes Pissarro from the other Impressionists is the feeling not of instantaneity, of a moment captured, but on the contrary, of a slow, savoured span of time, perhaps a whole day, the period of work and siesta, without the dramatics of sunrise or sunset.

By the mid-Seventies the pockets are back and often additionally screened by trees: the effect is of something withheld yet dependable, as if the foreground were to be enjoyed now for its openness to light and air, but the middle-ground were being kept in reserve for its solidity and protectiveness. Pissarro had a Maoist vision of everyone one day taking part in agricultural work for some part of the year, though unlike Mao he saw it as a pleasure not a duty. A naive vision perhaps, but there is nothing naive about its expression in his paintings: 'sadness, grief, bitterness, I forget them all, I don't even know the meaning of them, in the joy of working.'

Films

John Coleman

Travesties

The Alternative Miss World (X) *Classic, Chelsea*
The Island (X) *Plaza*
Raise the Titanic (A) *Leicester Square Theatre*

In a week that has anyway been one long drag there is something to be said for a 90-minute film that makes a comic virtue of going *en travesti*. The knit-your-own-movie school usually finds me bunking off for the afternoon, but Richard Gayor's spirited documentary, *The Alternative Miss World,* the apotheosis of tat, made me proud to be British. For where else in the world — the 'alternative' world — would you be likely to drum up such a nice, even refreshing celebration of rank amateurism? The event so agreeably recorded took place in a vast circus tent on Clapham Common a couple of years ago — another of the freaky Andrew Logan's spoof beauty contests, past winners of which have included the black entertainer Eric Roberts and film director Derek Jarman. An occasion where taste and reason are distinguished by their absence, it brings before the reddened eye such high and posturing entrants of all sexes as a whipcracking Miss Wolverhampton Municipal Baths, a ghoulish Miss Windscale Nuclear Reactor, a hamburger trailing bouncing chips (Miss Consumer Products), and Miss Piss. Cabaret is 'Big Spender', screechingly rendered by non-singing Yvette and her blondined, non-dancing Outdoor Girls.

Watching this boiled-down version of a scatty, self-admiring happening has — one suspects — several advantages over having actually attended, when a hipflask and/or other heightening aids were probably useful. The film can go bitchily behind the scenes, where fellows are howling for hair lacquer and one of the judges, Molly Parkin, glass in hand, is already beyond arbitration. And it can allow a pretty marvellous *après-chichi* commentary, in which Eric Roberts, a rolypoly American contestant, Miss Bronx (Stephen Holt), and a Miss Parkin seeing what she missed — her buxom beautiful daughter Sarah as Miss Marilyn, for instance — swap tart and enthusiastic impromptus: 'I once had a miscarriage in Wolverhampton,' muses our Molly; 'so much for fast food', lisps Stephen as the hamburger-person descends hazardous stairs; the nuclear mutant out of Hammer Horrors is clearly out of the prizes — drawls a limp voice over, 'I think it would be *difficult* for *him* to open a supermarket'. Jenny Runacre is a stunning distaff competitor, but the winner is a crinolined lad from Liverpool, 'no false tits, no shaved armpits, a victory for the *natural* look'. How this make-up artist manages to fall *off* his ass at the end you eager Chelsea-ites must pay to discover.

One last mystery: what happened to Joan Bakewell, credited as a judge but nowhere in sight?

The dressing-up box gets another rummage in *The Island,* written by Peter (*Jaws, The Deep*) Benchley and near-anonymously directed by Michael Ritchie. Top magazine reporter Michael Caine, on the trail of a story about hundreds of missing small boats and their occupants, crashlands with his 12-year-old son Justin on a Caribbean isle and is taken prisoner by a very motley crew of inbred pirates, led by David Warner and talking funny: 'What also else what you saw?' and 'Noble make good fic fic'. The latter gem comes from one Beth, the only safely pregnable female among the bloodthirsty halfwits, and Caine-on-a-chain is soon entrusted with the 'thrusting' necessary to make an unaddled baby buccaneer, no bad deal when Beth has washed some of the mud off her face. This crass adventure yarn opens with ominous promise and has scattered good lines between father and son. Gun-toting son is turned against father; faltering attempts at humour fade away amid yo-ho-ho boardings and carnage; the pirates, among them poor Dudley Sutton in haircurlers, are accurately summed up by an irritated Mr Caine — 'a bunch of assholes playing Long John fucking Silver'.

Elsewhere, a few more stretch-marks are added to the swollen belly of incredulity by Lord Grade's latest folly, *Raising the Titanic,* which would have us believe that the famous liner sank on 14 April 1912, with a precious cargo of 'byzanium', 'a radio-active mineral', smuggled into its holds. America needs the mineral to power an impenetrable new laser protection screen round its perimeters; the USSR wants it to make bombskis. Hence the title. Much of the action occurs underwater, which is unfortunate since little of it is visually decipherable. Alec Guinness mugs in a bit part as a Cornish innkeeper, serving hairily tawny pink gins.

The sole moments of spectacle have a barnacled big boat breaking water. As transient romantic interest, Anne Archer intrudes a disrupting naturalness amid the plastic Action Men. Adam Kennedy's dialogue comes with the ghostly outlines of balloons encircling it. SOS? Save your money. Kurosawa's epic *Kagemusha* (Gates, Notting Hill and Camden Town) opens a crammed London Film Festival — 13-30 November — on which a report in next week's issue.

Creation Myth

Replying to Charles Marowitz's recent attack on the pretensions of theatre translators (NS 24 October), JOHN WILLETT states the case for an agreed code of conduct to protect translators against exploitation.

Charles Marowitz's 'Translators are not Creators' seems to me a pretty desperate piece of prose: the silliest and worst-written article I've read for quite a time. On points of fact: 1. Charles Marowitz left at lunch-time, less than half-way through the conference which he claims to describe. 2. He has roughly doubled the number present at it. 3. It was neither intended to be a meeting only of translators nor prompted solely by his own misdemeanours. Actually the Riverside and I invited at least as many theatre directors, administrators and dramaturgs as we did translators and scribes; and although in the event the latter preponderated, there were articulate representatives of the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Exchange, the Bristol Old Vic and the Glasgow Citizens, not to mention the Riverside itself and the Open Space.

The object was *not* to protect the translator's strict legal rights (which are established by copyright law and can be negotiated — like it or not — for a royalty and/or a fee, just like other such rights), but to agree to a code which would ensure fairness and honesty under the rather special circumstances prevailing in the theatre. My intention was to recreate a mutual confidence which is at present lacking (thanks certainly in part to one or two episodes at the Open Space), with the result that translators insist on their strict rights irrespective of theatrical realities, while theatre directors aware of this tend to cheat or ignore the translator. I know that we stopped short of achieving anything so utopian at the meeting, but it is just rubbish to talk of self-congratulation.

It's all on the record. The whole meeting was taped, and I hope we can raise the funds to transcribe and publish it. Among other things I think it might give a healthy shock to translation theorists, who seem to have very little idea what really goes on in our particular neck of the jungle. Is that 'academic'? This is for some reason a specially dirty word to the prudish Mr Marowitz, so let me assure him that as far as I know the only translator-academics present were Edward Braun and the 'browbeaten' Inge-Stina Ewbank. (I would incidentally be very sorry if she thought his descriptions of events was right.)

As for the wider issue — the amazing discovery that 'Translators are not Creators' — of course they are not, and I agree with Marowitz that there is too much tendency to suggest that they are. Translation is all kinds of things: a skill, yes (though of a very subtle and sophisticated kind), an obsession, a service, a tribute, an obligation. It is also pretty hard and exasperating work, and can consume an awful lot of time, not to mention mountains of expensive paper. It can in my view result in a work of art, even though it can never exactly recreate the original. But to say that it is creative in anything like the same sense,

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while this may help to encourage the translator and raise the status of the genre, is simply misleading. Part of the general second-rateness of English literature in our time is (I've long believed) due to the consoling assumption that secondary branches like translation and criticism are as important as the real thing. They aren't.

In the theatre there are always a number of interpreters between the dramatist and his audience. There is the director; there are actors and possibly musicians and a horde of other highly-skilled experts; sometimes there is also a translator and/or adaptor. All these are quite distinct from what I myself would call the middlemen, who to me are the persons administering the media and controlling their diffusion — the non-artists on whom so much in the arts ultimately depends. But *none* of those interpreters is a true creator, to be spoken of in the same breath as the playwright. However much each may be able to bring to a production in the way of his own gifts and his own insights, he is still subordinate to the conceptions and text of the original creator. If he thinks he isn't, he will mess them up.

Not that I actually recall this question of comparative creativity ever coming up at the Riverside meeting. So I suspect that it is just a half-doped, feebly buzzing bee from the back of Marowitz's private bonnet. All the same, the fact that it has now flopped unseasonably out on to a page of the *New Statesman* may serve to show why such a meeting was needed. For there clearly *has* been a tendency in some areas of the English theatre to treat the skilled translator as a nuisance and a second-class citizen, to be disregarded and dismissed, if not positively disliked, particularly once his work has been cannibalised for the benefit of some better-known adaptor. The guilty assumption seems to be that because he is not the original creator and doubtless (unlike the director) has an academic job, there is no good reason to pay him for his knowledge, imagination and time.

I hope that this is an unrepresentative view, and that the dark suspicions separating the true translator (i.e. one who knows the work and the language) from the rest of our theatre can be cleared away. Introducing an English audience to a worthwhile foreign play — whether old or new — is a delicate and complicated business which calls for a wide variety of gifts and abilities on the part of all the numerous interpreters involved. They have to devote themselves to it as a team, which in turn means recognising one another's special talents and problems, and not trying to hide one's own limitations. Anybody who impedes this process will end up by distorting the audience's view of the work.

Weekend Competition

No 2643 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Is it really night? Compers are asked to depict the demise of *The Times* as it might be portrayed by Dickens or Shakespeare. Up to 150 words of prose or 16 lines of verse by 28 November.

No 2640 **Set by A. Boteman**

Limericks encapsulating the achievements of famous scientists or inventors.

Report **By Fat Jeff**

It is my sad duty to report that Perkins, the Complex's chief postal sorter, bowing under the weight of six pregnant mailbags, expired just as he reached the top of the stairs. Inspecting his cargo, I decided that he probably died in vain: too many of the entries suffered from rickety scansion, duff rhyming and, above all, an absence of the final-line pay-off. Four newtons to the noble exceptions.

Sigmund Freud said that one who reflects
Sees that sex has far-reaching effects;
For bottled-up urges
Come out in great surges
In directions that no one expects.
PETER ALEXANDER

Marconi, whose ardour was tireless,
Sat down and invented the wireless,
Which makes it less tough
For the musical buff
Who lives in a town that is choir-less.
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Watt's dream was the cream of steam engines.
Instead we got trains with a vengines:
A lot of hot air,
And 'Travellers' Fare' —
Were these his invengine's intengines?

M. Guillotin made his Rex ex.
He divided, and ruled, either sex.
His capital cutter
Would slice, as through butter,
Pierres from their Robes, and their nex.
BILL GREENWELL

Archimedes cried: 'Well friends, I hope
With my principle you can all cope;
Which proves, in bath-water,
We weigh less than we oughter
(Though it's useless for finding the soap).
PASCOE POLGLAZE

Exposing his plate to the air,
Did its clever inventor declare;
'C'est venue — ma photo —
Complète — in toto —
C'est magnifique, je suis Daguerre!'
JOYCE JOHNSON

A calculus fit to compute on,
White light, and a head to drop fruit on,
A mind to absorb it
And soar into orbit —
That's all that it takes to be Newton.

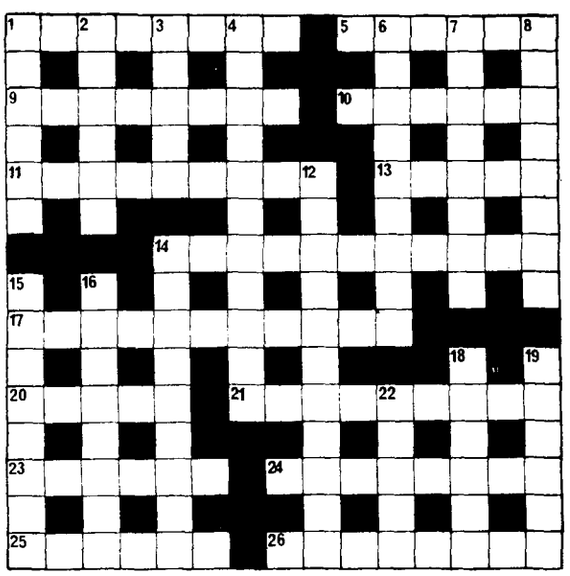
Said nude Archimedes: 'Eureka!
I'll screw up the sea in a beaker,
I'll lever the earth — '
So he heaved up his girth
And found he'd invented the streaker.
GINA BERKELEY

Two earnest young fellows named Wright
Discovered the secret of flight;
Now the earnest young crews
Of the B52s
Can demolish the world overnight.
BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

'Relativity,' Einstein would say,
'Leaves me no time to see you today,
But one day I might
Travel faster than light
And meet you the previous day.'
HENRY HETHERINGTON

Weekend Crossword 1363

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1363, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 25 November.



ACROSS

1 Flowers intimidate the fielders (8)
5 A northerner after a thousand discovers something lucky (6)
9 There are upper-class couples all round the street, but not where the servants are (8)
10 Fine head (6)
11 Where there is noise about silver being changed (9)
13 After a very quiet introduction this fish would make an advance (5)
14 This part of the agreement could make it plain to us (11)
17 Coward was against a stage career for this miss (11)
20 Train bore (5)
21 Sign of unrest with king after revolt (9)
23 Song about little return in lost ground (6)
24 Inseparable from woman in endless mixed tennis (8)
25 During the holidays one takes exams again (6)
26 It stands up to fire with the finest in an emergency (8)

DOWN

1 Expression of repugnance in animal when trapped (6)
2 Sensibly take the women's organisations to the city (6)
3 Depart for holidays (5)
4 One of the flock discovers her in love wildly pursuing famous lover (11)
6 Find out and trace wrong in an offence (9)
7 The drug I prohibit is held up in containers (8)
8 Object to a place for driving because it is a babyish activity? (8)
12 Charlatans take high ground on eastern shores (11)
14 Although a commentator in the end I appear in the final (9)
15 I dwelt with doctor turning into fiddler (8)
16 Learners discover water in river (8)
18 The best fighter around the Newcastle area (6)
19 Combines one with two points (6)
22 Subject for a town (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to Salamanca 35

J	A	C	K	R	A	B	B	I	T	E	C	
U	R	C	H	I	N	U	R	I	A	T	A	
R	O	T	I	F	E	R	A	B	L	U	B	
A	M	Y	L	L	U	G	C	H	A	I	R	
T	A	U	A	E	X	A	H	A	P	R	I	
S	T	I	F	F	E	N	B	L	O	A	T	
F	I	N	A	L	N	E	G	L	I	G	E	
A	C	T	T	M	O	T	S	E	N	W	L	
T	R	A	G	O	P	A	N	Y	O	H	O	
H	O	I	K	T	H	E	A	T	R	E	S	
O	U	T	R	E	Y	S	P	A	H	E	E	
M	X	E	A	T	A	N	S	W	I	L	L	

Prizewinners to Salamanca 35

D. M. MacKinnon (Galashiels)
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Justice for the world's poor

WORLD DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENT

WORK FOR WDM

The World Development Movement has two full-time vacancies at its Coven Garden office.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION OFFICER

Applicants should have proven writing ability and experience and skills suitable for work in the following areas, **action-oriented research** and analysis of development issues producing factsheets, briefing papers, booklets, etc., **Information** and publicity, including writing material for our newspaper, SPUR, **lobbying** key decision-makers particularly in government.

CAMPAIGN OFFICER

The job will be to mobilise the Movement of specific WDM campaigns such as tea, Brandt and aid to help organise lobbies of Ministers and MP's. Applicants should have some campaigning experience, a good working knowledge of the major development issues and be able to write campaign action material. Some experience in politics, public relations and the trade union movement would also be useful.

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Applications by letter with CV and names of 3 referees to
WDM, Bedford Chambers, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8HA.
For job description send s.a.e. indicating which job, or ring 01-836 3672 to be sent details.
Closing date 25 November.

The World Development Movement campaigns on the political issues of aid, trade and development. It is supported by all the main churches and aid agencies.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
(Department of the Clerk of the House)

SELECT COMMITTEE TEMPORARY ASSISTANTS

The Education, Science, and Arts Select Committee requires a Temporary Assistant to provide specialist assistance to the Clerk of the Committee and to undertake research in connection with particular enquiries.

The Education, Science and Arts Committee is appointed to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department of Education and Science, OAL and associated public bodies and similar matters within the responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The Assistant would need to have several years relevant experience from within this area; he or she may be called upon to operate within any part of the Committee's area of responsibility.

The preferred age range is 28-35 years and for a successful candidate within this range the salary is likely to be between £9,616-£11,516 according to age, qualifications and experience. Applications from particularly well qualified candidates aged from 25-27 will also be considered. The salary for this age group is likely to be between £7,966 and £9,571. There is a non-contributory pension scheme with interchange arrangements with other Public Service Pension schemes.

The appointment will commence as soon as possible after 1 February 1981 and will be for a period of 1-3 years.

Strict political impartiality is required of all House of Commons staff and the Temporary Assistant will be expected not to engage in political activities for the duration of the appointment.

For further details and application form write to

The Establishments Office, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. Or Telephone: 01-219 5598 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Closing date for return of Application forms **8 December 1980.**

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POLITICAL ORGANISER

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Further details and application forms from

The Political Secretary, RACS Ltd, 147 Powis Street, London SE18. Tel: 01-854 1143.

Closing date
Monday 1 December, 1980.

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Archie MacMillan, Assistant Secretary Variety, British Actors' Equity Association, 8 Harley Street, London W1N 2AB.

Closing date for Application Forms:
21 November.

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For a prospectus and an application form, contact:

The Secretary, Postgraduate School of Studies in Applied Social Studies, University of Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD7 1DP.

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REVIEW COPIES and others in fine condition bought by Vermilion Books, 57 Red Lion Street, WC1. Tel. 01-242 5822.

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NATIONAL GOVERNMENT Details from The Centre Party, 83 Donnington Ct, Donnington Rd, London NW10 3TU.

OPERA, BALLET: spare tickets Covent Garden (Dec.): Cinderella (£13), Tales of Hoffman (£14) Would intelligent, easy-going man enjoy company of friendly woman (50s)? Box 9910.

OPTIMISTIC prof. f., 50s, div., seeks sincere tolerant, leftish m., keen on arts, travel, homelife with sense of humour & liking people. Non smoker, London. Box 9912.

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Theatres

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NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252. Olivier (open stage) 'Amadeus', 'Sisterly Feelings', 'Othello'. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) 'The Caretaker', 'The Provoked Wife'. Cottesloe (small auditorium) 'The Crucible'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

OLD VIC. 928 7616 cc 261 1821 'S'. Eves 7.30 p.m. Mats Wed. & Sat. 2 p.m. Tonight, Wed. eve & Sat. mat., 'The Merchant of Venice'. Sat. Tues. eve, Wed. mat. Peter O'Toole in 'Macbeth' directed by Bryan Forbes.

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Swiss Cottage NW3

20 21 22 Nov 7.45 p.m.
Seats £1.50 at door.

Cinema

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Exhibition

MARGARET HARRISON: Small Works. At the Pentonville Gallery, 46 Amwell Street EC1 (Angel Tube). Tel: 01-837 9826. Mon-Fri 11-6 until 5 Dec.

Meetings

NO CRUISE MISSILES! NO TO NATO! Public Meeting, discussion and questions. Speakers: Bob Cryer MP, Professor Michael Pentz. Wed. 26 Nov., 7.30 p.m. Friends House, Euston Road, NW1. Organised by CND, Tel. 242 0362/3.

ICA EVENTS. The Mall. SW1. 14 Nov. 7.30 Artists from ICA Exhibition Issue discuss their work. Tkts £1.00; 15 & 16 Nov. Questions on Women's Art – a conference providing a forum for discussion of questions on women's art, individual, ideological and institutional. £2.00 per day; 18 Nov. 7.30 Dan Graham introduces video work by Judith Barry, Dara Birnbaum, Vivienne Dick and Martha Rosler. £1.00; 20 Nov. 7.30 Dan Graham discusses Feminism and Rock £1.00; 20 Nov. 1.00 Donald Woods discusses his book 'Asking for Trouble'. Tkts £1.00. 01-930 3647.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE: Sunday lectures on religion and philosophy. Enquiries 06285 26464.

TEACHING IN A RACIST SOCIETY. ALTARF conference 22 Nov. 10 a.m. Ebury Teachers' Centre, Sutherland Street, SW1. John Wright 'Beyond Multiracial Curriculum' Tariq Ali 'State Racism' workshops. Creche 946 2672 in advance.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme. Sunday 16 Nov. 8 p.m. Commemoration: 'The Theosophical Movement'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

THE LSE SOCIETY. Special Lecture. Prof. Sir Edmund Leach FBA on 'Once a Knight is quite enough: Fieldwork in Buckingham Palace'. In the chair Prof. Sir Raymond Firth FBA. Tues. 18 November, 5.30 p.m. at LSE, Houghton St, WC2. Admission free.

THE ZIONIST OCCUPATION of Palestine: Commonwealth Institute, London. Wednesday 19 November, 7.30 p.m. Speakers from NUIS, BAZOPS. Special Guest speaker: rabbi Moshe Epstein (Neturei Karta). Entry by ticket (free) only. Written application for tickets to Ticket Administrator, 75/77 Kenway Rd., SW5.

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Day of Remonstration, Friday, 21 November 1980
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Speakers: **Dick Douglas MP, Arthur Stock, Ed Berman, John Robinson, Eric Robinson.**

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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON. Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch-Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. 18 Nov. 'Funny Sounds and Funny Truths (Aspects of Rabelaisian 'Folly')' by Professor M.A. Screech; 20 Nov. 'Urban Problems and Policies in the EEC' by Dr W. I. Morrison.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON. (Gower St, WC1E 6BT). The Rickman Godlee Lecture by Professor Bernard Williams, 'Legislating About Pornography', Thurs. 20 November at 5.30 in the Collegiate Threatre, Gordon St, WC1. Admission Free. Without Ticket.

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY Meeting on Wednesday 19 November 7.30 p.m. Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1. Derek Foster MP speaking on 'Socialism and the Voluntary Organisations'. All welcome. Further details Helen Price 01-870 2233.

Conferences

SCIENTISTS IN THE SLUMP. A one day conference. Speakers from ASTMS, TASS. Digbeth Hall, Birmingham, Sat. 22 Nov. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Further details from BSSRS, 9 Poland St, W1. 01-437 2728.

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Feminist Theory — 27-29 March: Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday.

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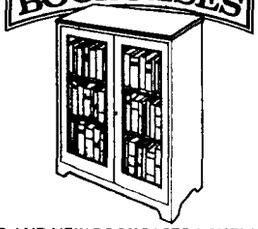

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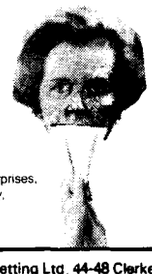

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